Crossroads of Turkey

LAND TOUR

Plus optional extensions in

Athens, Greece; Urfa & Adana, Turkey

TKY/TKA 2013

Grand Circle Travel
Crossroads of Turkey
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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK
We've gathered some introductory information that may prove helpful for this Grand Circle itinerary. For detailed and timely information, it's wise to visit appropriate websites and confirm luggage regulations, weather conditions and other variable elements of your trip. If you expect to embark on personal exploration, or wish to discover more about the countries you visit, we suggest that you consult your choice of the many in-depth travel guidebooks devoted to your destinations. Refer to our additional resources section (at the end of the handbook) for other sources of insight.

ABOUT GRAND CIRCLE TRAVEL
Grand Circle Travel, founded in 1958 to serve the American Association for Retired Persons (AARP), is the leader in international travel, adventure and discovery for Americans aged 50 and over. Grand Circle vacations have been recommended by *The New York Times*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Travel+Leisure*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Arthur Frommer's Budget Travel*, among other publications. But our most impressive reviews come from the more than one million people who have traveled with us and from readers of *Condé Nast Traveler* who placed Grand Circle Cruise Lines, the cruise branch of Grand Circle, in the Top 10 of the World's Best Cruise Lines for seven years. Grand Circle has earned a spot on the prestigious *Condé Nast Traveler* Gold List for seven consecutive years as well. For 2011 *Condé Nast Traveler* named seven Grand Circle river ships among the 20 best river ships in the world; for 2012 the Grand Circle Cruise Lines was named to their Platinum Circle of top cruise lines.

YOUR GCT PROGRAM DIRECTOR
During your Grand Circle Land Tour, you'll have reliable assistance available at all times from an on-site Grand Circle Travel Program Director. Your Program Director is a resident of Turkey who is fluent in English and can give you an inside perspective on your destinations.

Many Grand Circle Program Directors are graduates of professional education programs for travel guides. In addition, they receive specialized training directly from Grand Circle, training that is based on what we've learned from thousands of past travelers about how to make the trip most enjoyable. Your Program Director offers both a deep knowledge of the region and a commitment to make this a very pleasant, informative, and rewarding travel experience for you.

Your Program Director will provide sightseeing tips, handle all travel details, reserve optional tours you choose to take, oversee your Discovery Series events, and provide any other assistance you may need. You will be in the company of the Program Director throughout your Land Tour and during the optional trip extensions if you choose to take them.

1. PASSPORT, VISAS AND TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

Passport Required

U.S. citizens need a valid passport for this itinerary.

Note

Your passport should meet these requirements for this itinerary:

- It should be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S.
- It should have the recommended number of blank pages (see below for details).
- The blank pages must be labeled "Visas" at the top. Pages labeled "Amendments and Endorsements" are not acceptable.

Recommended number of blank pages:
This recommendation is based on a "worst case" scenario. When you are on this adventure, you might use fewer pages, depending on the whims of the Immigration official on duty that day. Since the consequence of having too few pages can be severe—you could be denied entry into a country—we feel that it's better to be safe than sorry, and we strongly recommend that you follow these guidelines.

- **Pre-trip, Athens:** 1 blank Visa page
- **Main trip only**: 2 blank Visa page for entry into Turkey.
- **Both Extensions and base**: 3 blank Visa pages

Please take moment to check if your passport meets all of these requirements. If not, you could be refused entry into a country. And if that happens, you might be required by that country to return to the U.S. immediately, **which would be at your own expense**.

If you need to renew your passport or get extra pages:
Contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at **1-877-487-2778,** or visit their website at **www.travel.state.gov** for information on obtaining a new passport, renewing your existing passport, or for additional pages. You can renew your passport by mail if it is not damaged, you obtained it within the last fifteen years, and it's in the name you want on your new passport. Many local post offices carry forms for renewing by mail or obtaining extra pages. Allow several weeks for processing your passport. You may also contact our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at **1-800-556-9990** for help with your passport.

NOTE: *When updating your passport, it is worthwhile to check the prices on all the different services that might apply to you. For example, it might be less expensive to renew your passport than to have pages added, depending on the number of pages you need.*

Visas Required

Turkey: U.S. citizens holding a U.S. passport need a visa for entry into Turkey. This visa can be obtained upon your arrival, but we recommend obtaining it in advance to avoid last-minute complications. We will send you the necessary visa application forms, instructions on how to fill them out, and the amount of the visa processing fees approximately 100 days prior to your departure. This information is provided by PVS International, a national passport service that we highly recommend.
Note: *Applying for your visa within 30 days of your departure will result in additional expenses and fees.*

No U.S. Passport?

Non-U.S. citizens or non-U.S. passport holders: If you are **not** a U.S. citizen or if you possess a passport from a country other than the U.S., it is your responsibility to check with your local consulate or embassy about possible visa requirements. Or you may contact PVS International, who can also assist non-U.S. citizens:

PVS International
Passport & Visa Services
1700 N Moore Street
Rosslyn Center, suite 310
Arlington, VA 22209
Telephone: 1-800-556-9990

Backup Photocopies

The smartest security precaution you can take is to make photocopies of your passport's personal information pages, your air tickets, your traveler's check serial numbers (if you're using them), and your credit cards. Also, bring extra passport-sized photos. Make a list of the phone and fax numbers for reporting lost credit cards, your travel protection plan company (if you have an optional travel protection plan) and medical emergency network. Keep these documents separate from the originals, and they can save you immeasurable time, money, and trouble if your originals are lost or stolen as you travel. In addition, scan these photocopies and email them to your email address; you can then print out replacement copies if necessary.

2. YOUR HEALTH

Keep Your Abilities In Mind

You can encounter unaccustomed challenges on even the shortest journey — this land tour, for instance, is an active itinerary and features a fair amount of walking, sometimes following steep, unpaved, or cobblestone pathways. Some of the places you visit have not been improved with elevators, escalators, ramps, railings or other aids that you may be used to. If you have difficulty walking in terms of balance or stamina, or are generally inactive in your daily life consider an exercise program to tone up for your trip. For your comfort and safety, we recommend this program only to individuals in good physical condition. If in doubt, consult your physician describing the length and type of rigors you'll encounter. *Please note that this trip is not wheelchair accessible; nor can Grand Circle Travel accommodate motorized scooters of any kind.*

Health Check and Inoculations

If you have any ongoing medical conditions or concerns about your health, we highly recommend that you schedule a checkup with your personal physician at least six weeks in advance of your departure date. Discuss with your doctor any aspects of your international itinerary that may affect your health and be guided by his or her advice. A loose filling or developing cavity would be difficult to remedy while you are traveling. You may want to have a dental exam before your trip.

If you have a condition that requires special equipment or treatment, you must bring and be responsible for all necessary items related to your condition. If you take medications regularly, be sure to pack an ample supply that will last your entire trip, as obtaining refills of your medication can be difficult during your trip. Pack these medications in your carry-on bag, and keep them in their original, labeled containers. To be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications, you should also bring copies of the prescriptions, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name.

Vaccinations:

Check with the CDC: To ensure you receive any needed vaccinations we suggest that you check the current recommendations of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for your destination. You can contact them at:

On-line —visit the CDC's Web site at **www.cdc.gov/travel**
By phone—at the CDC's Hotline toll-free at **1-800-232-4636** 24 hours a day. Please note that automated information may be arranged topically by disease, rather than by country or region.

Consult your doctor: After checking the CDC's recommendations we strongly suggest that you consult your family physician (at least 6 weeks prior to departure) concerning any vaccinations or medications that you may need on this trip. At the time of print there were no specific vaccinations required for entry into any of the countries on your itinerary.

Health Precautions:

Prevention of Malaria: According to the CDC, at this time malaria is not present in any of the places on the main trip. Malaria has been reported present in low amounts in areas surrounding Gaziantep, which we visit as an optional extension from the main tour. The easiest preventative steps against malaria are to apply insect repellant and wear long pants and long sleeves.

Malaria is easily treatable by use of a prescription anti-malarial drug. If you are taking the optional extension to Urfa & Adana, we suggest you consult your doctor as to which medicine (if any) he or she recommends for you.

Because the malaria risk in this area has been characterized as low and the Turkish Department of Health recently announced they have taken preventative measures, your doctor may not recommend medication at all. But if he or she does suggest medication, the CDC recommends you purchase your anti-malarial drug before you travel. Symptoms of malaria do not present themselves until at least 7 to 9 days after the infection; so if you feel unwell or have flu-like symptoms in the weeks after you return home, please let your doctor know about your recent trip.

Traveler's diarrhea: Perhaps the greatest health risk in Turkey is traveler's diarrhea, caused by eating contaminated fruit or vegetables or drinking contaminated water. When dining out on your own, watch what you eat. Stay away from ice, uncooked food, and non-pasteurized milk and milk products. Drink only bottled water, which is readily available. Mild cases of diarrhea may respond to Imodium or Pepto-Bismol (not as strong as Imodium); both can be purchased over the counter before you go.

Restrictions for the optional *Ballooning Over Moonscape* tour:

You must be physically able to climb in and out of the balloon basket (sides are 42" high), stand unassisted for an hour, and be able to adopt a bended knee/seated position for landing. You should not fly if: you've had recent surgery, have severe back or hip problems, are frail, have mobility problems, have certain pre-existing conditions (epilepsy, osteoporosis, etc) – among other restrictions. (Note also that there is a supplemental fee for passengers weighing more than 252 lbs.) Please contact our Traveler Support Team at 1-800-321-2835 for details.

Flights are regulated by the Civil Aviation Law, under a public transport license and the balloon pilot is the final arbiter of whether to fly or not. Common reasons for not flying are weather/wind conditions that may not be obviously bad. A poor forecast can cancel a flight on a seemingly perfect morning; wind speeds at altitude may be outside the balloons capabilities, or in wrong directions – but invisible from the ground. Rain and poor visibility are also deterrents. Disappointing as a cancellation may be, the decision always considers the safety of the passengers first.

3. LUGGAGE REGULATIONS

Size, Number and Weight Restrictions

Knowing current industry standards for international flights you can start to plan what type of luggage you'll use, how much clothing to bring, etc. The following information can help you in your trip preparations. We'll remind you to confirm your U.S./international luggage limits (and update regional limits, if applicable) in your final documents (arriving about two weeks before your departure).

In addition to the international flights, you will also take domestic flights within the region on your post trip. The luggage limits on these flights are less than the average allowance for international flights**.**
This means that even if your international airline offers a larger weight limit, you will need to pack according to the lower restrictions, as indicated in the chart below. (See Arrival Information section below for further details.)

MAIN TRIP LIMITS	
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on bag per person
Weight restrictions	Varies by airline. The current **standard** is **50lbs for checked bags** and **15 lbs for carry-on bags**.
Size restrictions	Varies by airline. Measured in linear inches (*length+width+depth*). Generally, **62 linear inches is the checked bag limit**; **carry-on limit is 45 linear inches**.
Luggage Type	A sturdy, fabric-sided suitcase with built-in wheels and lockable zippers is recommended.
PRE-TRIP EXTENSION LIMITS	
The pre-trip has the same limits as the main trip.	
POST-TRIP EXTENSION LIMITS	
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on bag per person
Weight restrictions	The current **standard** is **33lbs for checked bags** and **17 lbs for carry-on bags**.
Size restrictions	Varies by airline. Measured in linear inches (*length+width+depth*). Generally, **62 linear inches is the checked bag limit**; **carry-on limit is 45 linear inches**.
Luggage Type	A sturdy, fabric-sided suitcase with built-in wheels and lockable zippers is recommended.

REMARKS / SUGGESTIONS
One suitcase and one carry-on bag per person: Due to the space limitations on bus transfers, you'll be restricted to one suitcase and one carry-on bag per person. This is to ensure that we have room for everyone's luggage. We ask that you abide by this limit to avoid inconveniencing your fellow travelers and prevent additional airlines luggage fees (which are your responsibility). Most airlines now charge to check more than one suitcase per person for flights to Europe and other international flights. **Note**: Enforcement of published restrictions by countries and airlines is a matter of governmental and corporate policy. Enforcement may include spot checks and may be inconsistently applied. Expect penalties and fines to be imposed immediately, however, when and if enforced. Before you choose to ignore the published restrictions you should ask: *Do I feel lucky?* And, even if you answer yes, you should make sure that you have the ability to pay the fine.

Should I confirm luggage restrictions with my U.S./international airline(s) before departure?
Absolutely, confirm current restrictions about a week or so before your departure. You should take this step no matter if your vacation has a lower limit then the average international flight or not, because there may be recent changes, such as new security regulations, or an update to the standard weight/size allowances. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our webpage in the *FAQ* section.

You should also check with the airlines on luggage fees—many airlines charge to check luggage, even on international flights. Others may charge a fee if you bring a second carry-on item, like a purse or a laptop. **These fees are not included in your trip price**; they are payable directly to the airlines. If you are making a connecting flight, you should also confirm if your luggage can be checked through to your final destination. For more information about air travel, see the "Air Travel" section of your *Important Information* booklet.

Airport Security/TSA

Restrictions on what can be included in your carry-on luggage may change. To avoid inadvertently packing restricted items in your carry-on, we suggest that you consult the Transportation Security Administration website at www.tsa.gov/public.

Liquids and your carry on: Follow the **TSA's 3-1-1 rule.**

For flights that originate in the U.S:
To reduce the risk of damage to your luggage, do not lock your bags when checking in for flights, or use the widely available TSA "accepted and recognized" locks.

For flights originating outside the U.S.:
On all flights outside of the U.S., we strongly recommend you lock your luggage. This is not a legal requirement but a precaution against theft. Have the keys handy, as you may need to open your luggage for a security screening or for customs in the U.S. or Europe.

4. WHEN YOU ARRIVE

GCT Air Travelers

U.S. Departure: If you are among a group of ten or more GCT travelers who depart the U.S. from your international gateway city, it is our goal to have a GCT Representative assist you at the U.S. airport with the check-in of your flight. Unless there are extenuating circumstances beyond our control, the Representative will be at the check-in counter three hours before your departure time and at the gate one hour before your departure time (security permitting).

Please note that if you are arriving at your international gateway city via a connecting domestic flight, the Grand Circle Representative will be stationed at the check-in counter for your departing international flight, not at the domestic arrival gate.

Arrival for Main Trip and Athens Pre-trip: At the beginning of your main program, a GCT Representative will meet you at the airport after you exit Customs and assist you with your transfer to the hotel.

Important note: *Airport porters are NOT allowed in the customs hall area. On arrival, you must take your luggage off the baggage carousel and load it onto a cart (available for a nominal fee), which you will then move through customs. When you exit customs, you'll handle your cart until reaching your motorcoach. Your motorcoach driver will load your luggage onto your motorcoach.*

Urfa & Adana, Turkey post trip: At the end of your base trip you'll transfer to the Ankara airport and fly to Diyabakir, and, after lunch and some sightseeing, you'll transfer overland to Sanilurfa. The Ankara - Diyabakir tickets are obtained by our regional office in Turkey so it is not possible for us to give them to you in advance. ***Note:*** **This is an internal flight: the weight of your checked luggage is restricted to 33 lbs (15 kg) on flights within Turkey, and your carry-on luggage is restricted to 17 lbs (8 kg).**

U.S. Return: At the end of your base trip or optional post-trip extension, you'll be transferred by motorcoach to the airport for your return flight to the U.S. If you are among a group of ten or more GCT travelers who return to the same U.S. gateway city, a GCT Representative will meet you as you exit Customs and help you find taxis, buses, hotel accommodations, or connecting flights. Again, it is our goal to have our GCT Representative waiting to assist your group. In rare instances, unforeseen circumstances may prevent this service.

Important Note on Name Tags: *Please remember to wear your Grand Circle Travel nametag when you exit Customs, upon arrival and when you return to the U.S., so that you are readily identifiable as a GCT traveler.*

5. MONEY MATTERS

How to Carry Your Money

U.S. dollars have an advantage. Cash is more readily exchanged and accepted than traveler's checks, and sometimes commands a better exchange rate.

There is no need to obtain local currency before your trip. You can change money at banks, most hotels, and money exchange offices. Please note that torn, dirty, or taped bills may not be accepted.

Currency exchange rates fluctuate daily. Your Program Director can advise you of the exchange rate upon your arrival. For current exchange rates, please refer to our website, your bank, or the financial section of your newspaper. On our website select the region and then click on the country you'll be visiting. A link to the currency converter is included in the menu on the page of each individual country.

Traveler's checks—*NOT* recommended: Due to security and value issues, Traveler's checks have generally been superseded by the flexibility of credit, debit & ATM cards. **Traveler's checks are not accepted in Turkey.** Many stores and restaurants simply don't accept them, and, if accepted, fees are astronomical. If you must have them, consider them a last, desperation "cash" resort.

ATMs and Debit Cards

Debit cards give you a reliable payment method and ready access to local currency. We recommend you use a debit card for withdrawals at ATM machines when you need cash, as it will allow you the flexibility of accessing money at your convenience without relying on bank hours for money exchanges. When traveling, typically PLUS, Cirrus, and other bank networks are available throughout large cities and small towns.

Always notify your bank before you leave home that you are going abroad so that they may remove any blocks on your account and also ask them about the number of withdrawals you may make abroad. For cash withdrawals, don't forget to memorize the actual digits of your card's 4-digit PIN (Personal Identification Number), as many keypads at foreign ATMs do not include letters on their numeric keys, they only display digits.

Note on ATM use: *Many banks have begun imposing a fee ranging from $1 to $5 every time you use an ATM in a foreign city. You may want to limit the number of withdrawals that you make. Your Program Director/Hospitality Desk Representative can advise you on locations, but when to exchange money is left to your discretion.*

Credit Cards

Though major American credit cards (American Express, Visa, and MasterCard) are accepted abroad, always inquire if your type of credit card is accepted before deciding on your purchase. It is also wise to notify the credit card company that you will be using your cards abroad so that they may remove any security block. When using a major credit card you may receive a different exchange rate than if you pay with cash; ask your bank or credit card company about the rate before you leave.

Please be aware that credit cards might not be accepted for small purchases or in the markets. Note that the *Discover* credit card is not widely accepted outside the U.S., and the *Star* card is not accepted in Turkey. Keep your receipts in case you have questions about the conversion or exchange rate. Also, keep your receipts as proof of purchase for items to be shipped home.

***PIN* numbers and Credit Cards**
In many parts of Europe a new credit card, called a chip-and-PIN card, has been introduced. This card is more secure than the swipe-and-sign card commonly used in the U. S., but it needs a *personal identification number* (PIN for short) to work.

Most shops in Turkey will still take the swipe-and-sign cards. And if the shop absolutely requires a PIN, you can use another form of payment – it's wise to have two or three options available if you know shopping opportunities will be coming up.

Please note: Optional tour payments made by credit card may take up to 3 months to process. For this reason we ask that you use a credit card that will not expire until three months following your trip. Because our headquarters are in Boston, charges may appear to be from Boston or might be labeled as "**OPT Boston**" (depending on your credit card company).

Currency By Destination

In Turkey

The Turkish lira (TL) is the official currency of Turkey. Banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

- Banknotes: 5, 10, 20, 50, 100 and 200 TL
- Coins: 1, 5, 10, 25, 50 kurus and 1 TL

U.S. dollars can *sometimes* be used in Turkey. Some businesses in Turkey will accept U.S. dollars; more will accept euros. This is most common in places/business that cater to tourists. Accepting euros and U.S. dollars is legal, but since they are not the official currency of Turkey, the businesses that accept them can do so on their own terms. This means that they may set their own exchange rate and might not be able or willing to make change for large bills. Generally, you'll be better off using Turkish lira for everyday use, and using euros or U.S. dollars as a backup

Use all your local currency while in Turkey. Turkish liras are worth a lot less outside the country, up to 20% less, so you won't want to take them with you.

There is no need to obtain local currency before your trip. You can change money at banks, most hotels, and money exchange offices. Please note that torn, dirty, or taped bills may not be accepted.

Currency exchange rates fluctuate daily. Your Program Director will advise you of the exchange rate upon your arrival. For current exchange rates, please refer to our website, or the financial section of your newspaper. On our website select the region and then click on the country you'll be visiting. A link to the currency converter is included in the menu on the page of each individual country.

Banking Hours

Banks are generally open from 8:30 am to noon and 1:30 to 5 pm, Monday through Friday. They charge a commission—usually 1% to 3% per exchange for traveler's checks. For cash exchanges, you'll get more for your U.S. dollar at one of the privately owned exchange offices. They offer a better exchange rate for cash than banks do. Look for the **DOVIZ** sign.

In Greece

The euro is the official currency of Greece. Euro banknote and coin denominations are as follows:

- Banknotes: 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, and 500
- Coins: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, and 50 cents; 1 and 2 euro

Banking Hours: Business hours vary from season to season and from district to district. In general, banks are open Monday through Thursday from 8 am to 2 pm, and Friday from 8 am to 1:30 pm. The National Bank of Greece on Syntagma is open for currency exchange until 9 pm weekdays, until 8 pm on Saturday and Sunday.

Shopping

It is Grand Circle Travel's goal to identify and provide you with shopping opportunities that highlight unique, locally produced products with good value from reliable vendors. For this reason there may be scheduled visits to local shops during your adventure. There is **no** requirement to make a purchase during these stops, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor's terms of purchase. **Grand Circle Travel cannot be responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.**

In Turkey

Fashionable clothes can be bought relatively inexpensively, as Turkey has a booming cotton industry. Turkish carpets and flat woven *kilims* (Turkish village rugs) can be found almost anywhere—the design corresponds to the area in which it was made; each region has its own specialty. You'll also find many wonderful items made with hard-beaten copper or brass: samovars, pots, pans, cauldrons, and more. Other crafts for purchase include ornate Meerschaum pipes; green or gold onyx bowls, vases and ornaments; gold jewelry; lace-edged scarves; and beautifully embroidered cotton blouses. Leather shoes, bags, cushions, jackets, skirts, vests, hats, gloves, and trousers are also good buys. Don't be afraid to haggle—the shop owners expect it and often you can get items down to a very reasonable price over a glass or two of tea.

Famous since Hittite times for beautiful ceramics, Cappadocia potters use traditional kick-wheels to create unique family designs and to recreate the pottery of the ancient Hittites.

Store hours: Smaller shops are open Monday through Saturday, 9 am to 6 or 7 pm, and closed on Sunday. This includes the Grand Bazaar and the Spice (Egyptian) Market in Istanbul. Larger shopping malls in major cities—such as Istanbul and Ankara—are open Monday through Sunday from 10 am to 9 pm.

Value Added Tax: A Value Added Tax, called *Katma Deger Vergisi*, or *KDV* in Turkish, is included in the price of many goods and services in Turkey. This tax is not added to your bill; it is already figured into the prices quoted to you. If you buy some big-ticket items in Turkey, such as a leather coat or Turkish carpet, you can recover the 8% or 18% *KDV* if the purchase was made in an authorized shop. To obtain the refund, you must have your purchase receipt stamped by a Customs officer when you leave the country. Within 20 days after your departure from Turkey, you must mail your stamped receipt back to the shopkeeper (so make sure you have the shop's mailing address), who will then either send you a refund check (if you paid cash) or issue a credit to your charge card (make certain your credit card number is clearly marked on your purchase receipt).

In Greece

Goods from all over Greece are available in stores in Athens. Specialties include handicrafts, gold and silver jewelry, embroidered shirts and dresses, fabrics, *flokati* rugs of fluffy sheep wool, pottery, onyx, marble, alabaster, and leather goods. These are available in the main shopping area downtown around Syntagma, Omonia, and Kolonaki squares as well as in Monastiraki, the flea market, where shopping sometimes involves bargaining. Best buys include gold and silver jewelry inspired from ancient Greek designs.

Another thing to keep in mind is where the regional specialties originate. Interesting ceramics are created in Sifnos, Skopelos, and Rhodes, and highly original embroidery is stitched in Skyros, Crete, Lefkas, and Rhodes. Arachova village on Mt. Parnassus, as well as the Thessaly and Epirus regions, specialize in *flokati* rugs.

Downtown stores are open six days a week and are usually open Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays from 8 am until 2:30 pm; Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 8 am until 1:30 pm and later from 5 pm until 8 pm. Shops around Monastiraki remain open on Sundays from 8 am to 12:30 pm.

We recommend that wherever possible you carry your purchases home with you, especially if they are valuable or fragile. (Remember to leave some extra space in your luggage when you are packing for your trip, so you can fit in your vacation purchases.)

If you plan a major purchase, we strongly recommend that you research the prices and quality available at home before your trip. Just one visit to an import shop or gold dealer will put you way ahead when you go shopping. This is the only way to know if you are getting a good price.

U.S. Customs Regulations and Shipping Charges

Exemption Amounts

Articles totaling $800, at fair retail value where they were acquired, may be imported free of charge if you bring them with you. A flat rate of duty—usually a percentage—will be applied to the next $1,000 worth (fair retail value) of merchandise. The U.S. Customs Inspector determines the value of your items when you enter, and is not bound by your bill of sale. In almost every case, however, a genuine bill of sale will be honored.

Fees on Items Shipped Home

Items shipped home are *always* subject to duty when received in the U.S. There will also be charges for shipping. Although some shops abroad may offer to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the customs facility closest to you and payment of the *export* duties (the fee to remove an item from its country of origin) not door-to-door shipping or *import* duties (the fee the U.S. government charges to bring an item into the U.S.). All additional duties or shipping charges would be the responsibility of the purchaser—you.

Therefore unless the item is small enough to mail or to be sent by a global parcel service (like FedEx) you should be prepared to pay customs duties and for shipping or pick-up from the nearest customs facility. This is why the U.S. Customs & Border Protection service states: “The most cost-effective thing to do is to take your purchases with you if at all possible.”

Illegal Items
It is illegal to import products made from endangered animal species. For more information on what you may or may not bring back into the United States, you can obtain the publication "Know Before You Go" from the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection by phone, mail or from their website:

U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20229
Tel. **1-877-227-5511**
www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/

Problem with a Purchase?

The best way to address a problem with a purchase is to not have one in the first place! So don't forget to examine merchandise before paying for it, check contracts or agreements before signing, and review your receipt before leaving the shop. For major purchases, don't hesitate to ask in advance about the return policy—local practice may vary from U.S. standards, so don't assume that you have a certain number of days after the purchase to speak up.

But what if you do discover an issue with an item later on? In that case, your best recourse is to contact the vendor directly. For this reason we recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop's contact information. Expect that any resolution will take longer than it would in the U.S. due to delays in communication, the complexities of international shipping/customs duties, and even cultural differences in how business is conducted.

To Tip or Not to Tip

Sometimes *that* is the question. The good news is twofold: we're fresh out of Shakespearean soliloquies, so no thesauri will get hurt here; and the answer the question "**to tip or not to tip** (and how much to tip if you so choose)" is ***always*** a personal decision. Tipping is a common practice both at home and abroad and we offer these guidelines to answer requests for appropriate tipping amounts. It can be useful to have this information on site – when the question *must* be answered – and ahead of time for travel budgeting purposes. Tips below are quoted in U.S. dollars; tips can be converted and paid in local currency (usually preferred) or in U.S. dollars (personal/traveler's checks should ***never*** be used for tips).

GCT Program Director: It is customary at the end of your trip to express a personal "Thank You" to your Grand Circle Program Director, especially if he or she has provided you with individual assistance. We recommend $4-$6 per person, per day. Please note that tips for our Program Directors can only be in the form of cash, and local currency is appreciated.

Airport/Hotel/Pier Porterage & Transfers: If you are using GCT transfer services, tips to hotel, airport, and pier porters are included in the cost of your trip. Tips to the motorcoach driver for your airport/hotel/pier transfers are also paid by GCT.

Motorcoach driver: $2 per person for each half-day tour/$3 per person for each full-day tour.

Housekeeping staff: $1 per person per day
(Note: If you are low on local currency, you can use U.S. dollars for tips.)

Included Group Meals: Your Program Director will tip waiters for the included meals when the group dines together.

Time at Leisure: During the times that you explore independently, you may dine in a local restaurant, take a taxi, or avail yourself of some other service where tipping is customary. Some restaurants will automatically add a service charge (*servis ucreti*) of 10% or 15% to your bill. If service is included, the bill may say "service included" (*servis dahil*). Oddly enough, this does not absolve you from the tip. The service charge goes either to the owner (patron) or to the maitre'd. If you choose to tip, leave 10% of the food bill on the table for the waiter, or hand it directly to him or her. Round off taxi fares. If the meter says 5,80 TL, give the driver 6 TL (the minimum fare is 2.95 TL to start and 1.83 TL for each kilometer – stepping into a cab costs about $2.10; note also that in slow traffic the fare will automatically increase .30 TL). Turks don't tip taxi drivers unless the driver has performed some exceptional service.

6. PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP

In General

Travel light: A good rule of thumb is to gather together everything you want to bring, and then take half of that. Eliminate all but the essentials and start packing a few days before you leave. That way, you'll have time to think—not fret—about what you might be forgetting. To have a varied travel wardrobe, yet keep your luggage light, we recommend you select a color scheme and pack color-coordinated clothing items that can be mixed to create different outfits.

Pack casual clothes: Comfortable, informal apparel is perfectly acceptable at each of your destinations. Basic pants, shirts, sportswear, everyday dresses/skirts, supportive shoes, and functional outdoor clothes that are relatively easy to care for are recommended. At dinner, you will not need to don "dressy" clothing; men do not need jackets or ties and women do not need fancy dresses.

Women travelers may prefer to dress modestly—opting for mid-length skirts and flowing pants over shorts—out of respect for the local culture. Though some Turkish women are very stylish and wear whatever is in vogue in the States, the majority dress conservatively in modest dresses or long skirts and loose blouses. Many also drape a scarf over their head. You'll rarely see Turkish women in shorts, but long pants and jeans are popular. Foreigners, however, may be wearing shorts in summer at resort areas and elsewhere, but if you want to receive the best possible welcome from the locals, we recommend casual but tasteful dress.

Ankara/Cappadocia—warm clothes required year-round: Evening temperatures always drop sharply in this mountainous area of Turkey, where the altitude is more than 3,000 feet above sea level. Even the hottest of days will always be followed by much cooler nights. Be prepared with a heavy sweater or fleece top, warm pants, thick socks, and, if you chill easily, a hat and gloves. In winter, you'll also want a winter parka and waterproof boots.

Seasonal packing tips: What you pack for the rest of Turkey will greatly depend on your travel season; plus you should be prepared for any stints of unusual weather. A June cold spell or a winter heat wave could happen. "Layering"—a sweater on top of a shirt on top of a turtleneck, and so on—is a good way to stay comfortable, as layers can be added or removed according to the local temperature.

Fall/Spring: The moderate temperatures of these seasons call for light pants, short- and long-sleeved shirts, casual dresses, skirts and tops, which can be layered up with cotton sweaters, thick knits, and jackets. Rain gear is recommended.

Summer: The summer season is consistently warm and can be humid. Pack clothing made of fabrics that breathe, such as cotton, silk, gauze, and linen. For sun protection, a sheer long-sleeved shirt over a tank top is ideal for women. Along the Mediterranean coast, locals tend to be less conservative in their dress than in Istanbul or Izmir. You'll see more sleeveless shirts and tops and shorter dresses. Here, you're likely to feel at home in shorts and sundresses.

Winter: It doesn't get really cold along the Mediterranean coast, but it does get damp and chilly elsewhere in Turkey. Istanbul may get dustings of snow. For optimal comfort, pack turtlenecks, warm shirts, thick knits, and woolens. A fleece jacket is ideal. Layer up for warmth when outdoors, and remove layers during heated motorcoach transfers and indoor sightseeing. Some museums, mosques, and palaces are barely heated in winter; you may want to stay bundled up when touring them.

Comfortable, supportive walking shoes: These are essential, for your comfort and safety. The country's magnificent ruin sites, mosques, palaces, and bazaars truly invite exploration by foot. But negotiating the rather uneven sidewalks and pathways can be a challenge—even for the most surefooted traveler.

Rain gear: Regardless of your month of travel, rainfall is certainly a possibility. We suggest you bring a folding umbrella and waterproof shell, preferably with a hood.

Mosque etiquette: Wear modest clothes when visiting mosques. Women should wear conservative dresses or skirts, preferably to the knees, and have arms and shoulders covered (and sometimes the head). You may want to bring a scarf for this purpose. Men should wear shirts with trousers, not shorts. At some of the most-visited mosques, attendants will lend you long robes if your clothing isn't appropriate.

Always remove your shoes before stepping inside a mosque or onto the clean area just in front of the mosque door. This is not a religious law, but a practical one, and it is strictly enforced. Worshippers kneel and touch their foreheads to the carpets, and they like to keep them clean. You may wish to bring heavy socks or a pair of slippers, as the floors in mosques can be cold.

Turkish baths: A bathing suit is the most comfortable attire for Turkish baths, and is also useful for swimming pools and saunas.

Luggage Suggestions

Consider a duffel bag or soft-sided suitcase for your checked luggage. Due to space limitations on our motor coaches, you are allowed one piece of checked luggage per person. Porterage at airports and hotels is provided for **one** bag per person. All bags should have luggage tags.

Consider a daypack or small backpack as your carry-on bag. It will do double duty during excursions and walking trips. A daypack leaves your hands free and distributes its weight onto your back. Packed with daily travel needs (sweater, camera, rain/wind jacket, water bottle, etc.), it will compress to fit the storage space of foreign motorcoaches, and yet still have room for an impulse buy at a local street market.

Inner bags: Packing is easier if you use inner bags to help organize your gear. Use plastic bags, nylon stuff sacks, or packing cubes to organize inside your suitcase. Isolate liquids, store camera gear and important papers in heavy-duty Ziploc style bags.

Tip**:** *Bring a second, empty lockable bag folded into your main suitcase, with a luggage tag and small lock. Use this to carry souvenirs home – but remember that you may incur extra luggage fees. If you're traveling with a companion we recommend "cross-packing," i.e., pack 2 outfits of your clothing in your companion's luggage and vice-versa, in case one bag is delayed.*

Packing Your Carry-On

Using a daypack as a carry-on bag for your flights is a smart solution. We **strongly urge** you to pack your carry-on with at least one full change of clothes, your camera gear, medications, changes of socks and underwear, your important travel documents, and other irreplaceable items, in case your checked bags go astray. Store camera gear and important papers in plastic bags to protect them from dirt and moisture. With a daypack you can then remove these items on arrival and load your bag with the gear you'll need on walking tours and excursions. It is usually best to pack liquid or pressurized items (like foaming shaving cream or hairspray) in a leak-proof bag or container inside your checked luggage. Currently, most airports worldwide limit the amount of liquids and gels than can be packed in your carry-on, see below.

NOTE: Restrictions on what can be included in your carry-on luggage change frequently. To avoid inadvertently packing any restricted items in your carry-on luggage, we strongly suggest that you consult the Transportation Security Administration website, at **www.tsa.gov** which keeps a current list of restricted items. From the main website click on *Our Travelers*, then *Air Travel*, and then you will see a link for *Prohibited Items*.

Clothing Suggestions

We've included information below on the weather you can expect for the regions you'll be visiting on your travels. Taking into account the climate you'll encounter and the general suggestions we offer above will enable you to create a flexible wardrobe that's light enough for sophisticated travel and will guarantee comfort in all the conditions you can expect to encounter. The luggage weight and size restrictions imposed by travel realities today have made traveling light an absolute necessity. With modern fabrics – Gore-Tex, Polarfleece, polypropylene, etc. – lightweight packing for comfort and protection through a wide range of weather is easy. A visit to any on-line or local sporting goods/outdoor stores (L.L. Bean, REI, EMS, etc.) will yield a treasure trove of lightweight, specialized, and fashionable clothing and gear that is readily adaptable to your itinerary.

Travel Gear Suggestions

Though it's often fun to do things as the locals do, it can be frustrating when daily necessities or conveniences from home aren't available. To travel wisely these days you must juggle your personal needs and preferences against the physical constraints of your transportation—whether it's an international airplane, a transfer motorcoach, a small ship or a day-long trek on a camel. You'll have to distinguish between what you **must** have, what you'd *like* to have, whether you can zip your suitcase closed, and what you can reasonably expect to wrestle through airport hallways and security checkpoints. Consult the following items to create your personal checklist – ignoring what you don't need and making the tough decisions over borderline cases. Remember that many airlines today will charge you extra for added luggage.

What not to pack: do not pack aerosol cans, as they tend to leak during air travel. Avoid packing glass bottles; use plastic containers instead. Leave at home checkbooks and any credit cards not essential for your trip, valuable jewelry, and anything that you would hate to lose.

Consider …

- ❑ Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, shampoo/conditioner, shower cap, body soap, etc.
- ❑ Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription
- ❑ Sunglasses with a neck strap
- ❑ Sunscreen, SPF 15 or stronger.
- ❑ Insect repellent with DEET
- ❑ Travel money bag or money belt, worn under your shirt/jacket if possible
- ❑ Moisturizer, lip balm
- ❑ Swimsuit
- ❑ Compact umbrella
- ❑ Wide-brim sun hat or visor (seasonal)
- ❑ Pocket-size tissues
- ❑ Moist towelettes (packets) and/or anti-bacterial "waterless" hand cleanser
- ❑ Flashlight, extra batteries/bulb
- ❑ Extra passport-sized photos
- ❑ Photocopies of passport, air ticket, credit cards (as well as the originals)

Medicines

- ❑ Your own prescription medicines
- ❑ Vitamins
- ❑ Cold remedies: Sudafed/Dristan
- ❑ Pain relievers: Ibuprofen/naproxen/aspirin
- ❑ Laxatives: Senokot/Ex-Lax
- ❑ Stomach upset: Pepto-Bismol/Mylanta
- ❑ Anti-diarrheal: Imodium
- ❑ Band-Aids
- ❑ Moleskin foot pads
- ❑ Antibiotics: Neosporin/Bacitracin

Other Gear

- ❑ Travel alarm or wristwatch with alarm
- ❑ Compact binoculars
- ❑ Hanging toiletry bag with pockets
- ❑ Extra socks (for mosques – shoes are ***not*** worn in mosques)
- ❑ Washcloth
- ❑ Handkerchiefs
- ❑ Basic sewing kit
- ❑ Electrical transformer & plug adapters—see “Regional Electricity” below.
- ❑ Travel journal/note pad/phrase book
- ❑ Home address book
- ❑ Photos, small gift for home-hosted visit
- ❑ Hand-wash laundry soap (Woolite) clothespins/travel clothesline/stopper
- ❑ Water bottle for land excursions
- ❑ Collapsible walking staff
- ❑ Pocket calculator for exchange rates
- ❑ Reading materials

7. REGIONAL CLIMATE INFORMATION

We can't predict what the weather will be during your travels, but you'll find historical averages and general information on the climate of your destinations below. As your departure nears it's a good idea to visit the *My Account* feature of **www.gct.com**, where you'll find monthly temperature averages for the countries you'll visit as well as a current 10-day forecast of local temperatures and conditions. Or check Internet weather sites (www.wunderground.com is very comprehensive) for those forecasts.

Turkey is a big country of quite varied topography and many climatic zones. Here are general guidelines for what kind of weather to expect at your destinations.

Istanbul/Canakkale: Situated in the Marmara region, Istanbul and Canakkale tend to be hot and slightly humid at high summer (late July to early September), with very little cloudy weather or rain and temperatures in the 70s or 80s. From May to early July, and again from late September to November, the weather tends to be moderate, with some rain but mostly clear days and pleasant temperatures in the 60s and 70s. In the winter (mid-December to mid-March) it's rainy and cold, with some snow; average afternoon temperatures are in the low 40s.

Ankara/Cappadocia: Here, the autumn and spring seasons are typically beautiful, with sun-filled skies and pleasant temperatures in the 50s, perhaps even in the 60s; evenings are always cooler, due to the high altitude. Winters are cold, with snow and ice patches. Summers are hot and dry, with cool evenings (cool enough for a sweater).

Antalya: Towns positioned on or near the Mediterranean shoreline enjoy a mostly temperate climate, with mild winters and glorious springs. Antalya often has fine weather year-round and rarely experiences extremes of cold or heat. Even in winter, temperatures typically hover around the high 50s and low 60s.

Izmir: Aegean coastal cities have a similar weather pattern to Istanbul's, except they are usually a tad warmer in the summer and a bit milder in the winter. Autumn often has lengthy warm spells that make it still feel like summer. Rainfall is rare between May and October. Wet weather, however, is something you should be prepared for as the winter months approach.

Athens (optional extension): Athens has an almost ideal climate—plenty of sunshine and dry air most of the year. During spring and early fall, days are very comfortable, with temperatures ranging from 60º to 80º. The beaches are less crowded and the water is still warm enough for swimming. In spring, Athens's surrounding hills come to life with gentle hues of green and colorful wild flowers. Summer heat is greatly tempered by coastal breezes, but on calm days, Athens can be very hot.

Here are the data from the weather observation stations at or closest to our destinations:

WHAT'S THE TEMPERATURE? *Average* highs (taken at 2 pm) and lows (taken just before sunrise) in °F.	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Istanbul												
High	46	47	51	60	69	78	82	82	76	67	57	50
Low	37	37	40	47	54	62	66	67	61	55	47	42
Ankara												
High	35	40	50	60	68	76	82	83	76	65	51	40
Low	20	23	29	38	44	49	55	55	47	39	30	26
Antalya												
High	58	58	63	70	77	86	92	92	88	79	68	60
Low	41	42	45	51	58	66	71	71	65	57	50	44
Athens—Optional Extension												
High	57	57	60	67	75	84	89	89	83	74	66	59
Low	45	45	47	53	60	68	73	73	67	60	54	48
Urfa—Optional Extension												
High	47	50	60	71	81	92	100	100	92	79	67	53
Low	34	36	41	50	58	67	74	74	67	56	48	40

Please note: The data cited here reflect *climate* as opposed to *weather* conditions, and serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. A 60 degree ***average*** high temperature means that days may be as warm as 80 or as cool as 40 – but it's most likely you'll encounter temperatures in the 50 to 70 degree range.

8. TRAVEL AND TECHNOLOGY

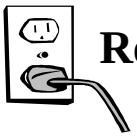
In General

Smartphone, tablet, digital camera/camcorder, MP3 player: travel today can involve technology that didn't exist even five years ago. The usefulness of digital devices is enormous: smartphones can keep you connected and offer up-to-the-minute information via your cell plan or a local Wi-Fi connection. With a tablet (or smartphone) you can store multiple country guidebooks, access maps and connect to the internet in a small, lightweight device. (***Tip****: you can download* ***this*** *document from the Grand Circle Travel website and import it into your tablet or e-reader, many of which can display PDF files.)*

Compact and lightweight, digital camcorders and cameras take high definition movies and still images of the people you meet and places you visit. For robust use a laptop may be effective; for occasional use it's wiser to rely on Internet cafes or a tablet and hotel Internet access rather than shoulder the heft and size of a laptop.

To use these devices you should first consider the services available at your destinations. You'll encounter a range of electrical standards, varied plug configurations to access the local current, erratic availability (electricity and internet access), and differing technological standards.

You'll need to assess your power and data storage needs, and the accessories required to recharge/connect/use these devices. Finally, it's smart to read the owner's manual *before* you depart. Pay particular attention to electrical, power and storage requirements to ensure that you understand exactly what you need. Thorough preparation is the best guarantee that your devices will work up to their potential.



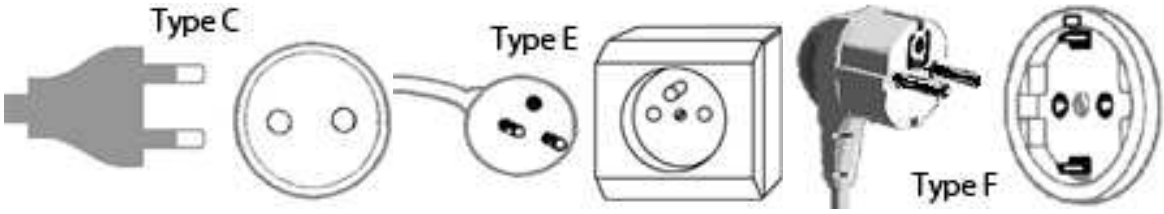
Regional Electricity

The standard U.S. electrical system — 110V 60Hz current and flat two- or three-pronged polarized plug system — is rare elsewhere. The rest of the world overwhelmingly uses 220-240V and 50/60Hz current with a variety of plug shapes, sizes, and configurations. Some plugs will work with multiple receptacles, while others won't. Europe is largely standardized to the Type C "Europlug."

Plugging a 110V U.S. appliance into 220/240V 50/60Hz service will ruin the motor. We suggest that you choose *dual* voltage appliances (widely available) that work on both 110 and 220/240 voltage. Dual voltage appliances need only plug adapters.

If you bring 110V appliances, such as a hair dryer (note that hotels often supply hairdryers and coffee makers) or a shaver, you'll need a transformer (to halve the 220/240V current) as well as plug adapters. Regional transformer/adapter kits can be found at hardware or online stores. However, transformers can be unreliable and a broken one will leave you lugging a useless 110V appliance. Battery-operated alternatives are an option, but will need a supply of batteries.

Turkey and Greece use the Type C "*Europlug*" and Type E plugs and receptacles that accommodate it and 220 V/50 Hz current.



If you use multiple digital devices—cell phone, digital camera, MP3 player, etc. – it's handy to have a travel power strip, perhaps with a surge suppressors and USB port for charging cell phones, MP3 players or e-readers without carrying device-specific plugs.

Smartphones

It will require some effort to get the most out of your smartphone when you travel. Even with an international roaming plan, costs can add up quickly – those handy apps often pile up download fees. The simplest solution is to shut down all cell phone functions, automatic data feeds and roaming options, and take advantage of your phone via any available Wi-Fi. With an Internet VOIP app (like Skype) you can make inexpensive calls. If necessary, turn international roaming back on and your phone will work as usual – albeit at added cost. If your phone doesn't support international roaming (most smartphones do), some carriers offer loaners.

App quality, availability and costs vary – as do platforms (iPhone, Android, Blackberry …), so again you'll need to do some legwork. Apps come in all forms: packing lists, currency converters, language translators, maps, journals, Wi-Fi hotspot finders … one problem is going to be searching through the vast array of available apps to uncover what works best and what you're likely to use most. Smartphones have a lot to offer, but their small size can be a drawback for some uses (maps, extended reading, etc.)

Cell Phones

If you want to use a standard cell phone while traveling overseas, be sure to check with your service provider (www.verizon.com, www.t-mobile.com etc.) to see if your phone will work outside the U.S. or whether you're better off renting an international phone. The websites www.travelcell.com and www.globalcellularrental.com have good information on rentals. Or, consider buying an inexpensive local phone for your stay.

Phone Calling Cards

If you don't carry a phone, you can use a prepaid calling card to call the U.S. with minimal additional charges. Besides the prepaid long distance charges, you might have a local fee of a few cents and possibly a connection fee if you are using your card at a hotel. Check with the reception desk prior to using it to avoid unexpected charges.

Calling cards purchased locally are usually less expensive than those purchased in the U.S. and are more likely to work with the local system. Note that dialing a U.S. 1-800 number outside the continental United States will incur costly long distance fees, since 1-800 does not work outside the U.S.

Photo Gear

For many people, capturing the highlights of their travel experiences in photographs or movies and sharing them is one of the most enjoyable aspects of the journey. Remember, however: some individuals and cultures and are less tolerant of photography than others. It's always best to respect local customs. And in some countries you might be charged for photography at specific sites, or banned from taking any photographs at all.

Digital cameras and camcorders are excellent travel companions—and many do dual duty by recording movies *and* still images. Fist sized camcorders can capture HD movies and high quality still photos; cameras the size of a deck of cards are great for snapshots and casual movie clips. With an ample supply of high-capacity memory cards you can record your whole trip with a small, lightweight package.

But you must remember the batteries. Recharging batteries is sometimes impossible, cameras can drain batteries *very* quickly, and replacements may be unavailable. Whether you need standard or proprietary batteries, it's wise to have spares. Be sure your charger will work with the local electrical system, and bring more than enough memory cards—they may be hard or impossible to find. Memory cards are small, thin and light: you can never have too much storage.

Compact cameras are impractical for distant subjects and are often weak in dim light. Some models have a zoom lens of up to 120mm, which is good for middle distances. For distant subjects a *megazoom* (with a zoom lens of at least 300mm) or a single lens reflex (DSLR) camera with up to a 300mm telephoto lens are good choices. With a DSLR you can use multiple lenses, though your gear can quickly get complex, weighty and cumbersome. Cameras or lenses that need a tripod are impractical for travel photography. A single mid-range telephoto lens (18-200mm) coupled with a small, fast prime lens (for low light/no flash situations) is an effective, flexible and compact kit. Consider mirrorless interchangeable lens cameras (MILC), which combine small bodies and multiple, small lenses with high quality for both still and HD movie images.

If you use a DSLR or MILC camera, protect the lenses with a UV filter and bring lens caps, covers, cleaning paper and a waterproof bag (a heavy duty Ziploc-style bag is good) to protect your gear. Be sure your camera has a flash that you can turn off, and if it's detachable, remember to pack it. (At many sites and museums, flashes are ***not*** permitted.)

Consider disposable cameras, as well. They are inexpensive and capable of acceptable photos as long as the light is not too dim or bright. X-rays do not damage the data of digital cameras (in any media format), and so pose no problems for travelers using digital cameras.

9. ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS

We're including some handy practical details and a brief introduction to the places you'll visit on your Land Tour. If you expect to explore in depth on your own, we recommend that you consult one of the many available book-length guides to your destinations. If you have one or two specific sites, museums or features that you're interested in, an Internet search is the ideal way to get-up-to-date information and details. And of course your Grand Circle Travel Program Director or Hospitality Desk Representative will be able to assist you with suggestions and arrangements of activities you wish to participate in during your stay.

Cuisine

If you dine out on your own, you can refer to the following to familiarize yourself with Turkey's unique cuisine and typical menu selections.

Turkish cuisine is thought by many to rank with French and Chinese as one of the world's great basic cuisines. The ingredients are often very simple, but are prepared with such care and finesse that the result is incredibly tasty. In brief, traditional Turkish cuisine is based on lamb and fresh vegetables. Lamb is grilled, stewed, roasted, or broiled. You'll find beef (but not much pork, which is forbidden to Muslims), and, particularly in Istanbul, seafood is popular too. But lamb is the foundation.

Vegetables are on an equal footing with lamb. Many of the best Turkish dishes consist of excellent fresh vegetables cooked with just one or two condiments and a bit of diced lamb for flavor. Fruit—and Turkey abounds in excellent fruit—is readily available with any meal.

Vegetarianism is not common in Turkey. If you merely want to minimize consumption of meat, you'll have no problem as Turkish cuisine has many dishes in which meat is used merely as a flavoring, not as a principal element. However, if you want to avoid meat completely, you'll have to choose carefully. A good dish to try is *menemen*, tomatoes topped with eggs and baked; it is fairly spicy. Eggplant, cheeses, *pilafs*, and yogurt are good supplements. Note that many of the bean dishes such as *nohut* (chickpeas, garbanzos) and *kuru fasulye* (fava beans) are prepared with lamb as a flavoring.

Restaurants (*restoran, lokanta*) are everywhere, and most are inexpensive. Specialties include *patlican salatasi* (pureed eggplant, perhaps mixed with yogurt); *palamut* (a darkish, full-flavored tuna) and *levrek* (sea bass); *karisik izgara* (a mixed grill of lamb); and *dolma* (stuffed vine leaves): the hot ones (*etli*) have ground lamb in them; the cold ones are made without meat, and seasoned with olive oil (*zeytinyagli*).

Turkish desserts are rich. They tend to be very sweet, soaked in sugar syrup. Many are baked, such as crumpets, cookies, or shredded wheat, all in syrup. *Baklava* comes in several varieties: *cevizli* is with chopped walnut stuffing; *fistikli* is with pistachio nuts; *kaymakli* is with clotted cream. *Krem karamel* is the Turkish version of flan, and *sutlac* is a milk-and-rice pudding. As an alternative to sweet desserts, Turkish fruit can't be beat. Try *kavun*, a delicious, fruity melon; or *karpuz*, a variety of watermelon.

Drinking Water

The water in most parts of Turkey is considered safe, but as an added precaution against possible stomach upsets, we recommend you drink only bottled water. It is readily available in hotels, restaurants, roadside stands, and shops.

Internet and Email

Most hotels in Turkey and Athens have Internet services available, some for free, some based on a fee for use. Many hotels will provide complimentary WiFi service in a common area, like the lobby or reception, but not in the guest rooms. Internet cafes are also available at different points throughout our adventure. You can either bring your own device during the trip and use WiFi where it is available, or leave it at home and rely on places that provide computers, like a hotel with a business center or Internet cafes.

Laundry Service

You can have your laundry done at your hotel, but it will be costly.

Newspapers & Magazines

English-language newspapers are sold in kiosks wherever tourists gather, as well as in big hotels. You can get papers from Britain (late and rather expensive), the *International Herald Tribune*, *USA Today*, and the *Turkish Daily News* (published in English), as well as prominent papers in other European languages.

Restroom Stops

Please note that the motorcoach vehicles we use throughout this tour do not feature restrooms. However, we have scheduled ample restroom stops into the daily itinerary.

Safety Precautions

Turkey is an admirably safe place, with a fairly low level of crime compared to the United States or Europe. This does not mean you should ignore the normal, prudent precautions. Beware of pickpockets, both men and women, in any crowded place, including buses, ferryboats, and markets. Avoid walking on dark streets late at night. When you're out exploring, do not carry a lot of money or any valuable items—entrust them to the hotel safe.

Athens in Brief—Optional Extension

City Layout and Details

Athens has two main centers: Syntagma (Constitution) Square and Omonia Square. Approximately a mile apart, these two squares are connected by two parallel avenues, Stadiou Street and Panepistimiou Street. From Syntagma Square, Mitropoleos Street leads, slightly downhill, to Monastiraki Square, near the flea market and the Plaka district. From Monastiraki Square, mile-long Athinas Street leads to Omonia Square. In the triangle formed by these three squares—Syntagma, Omonia, and Monastiraki—lies Athens's inner city, its shopping area, the central market, the main department stores, the post offices, banks, and many tavernas and restaurants.

Two helpful orientation landmarks are the Acropolis and Lycabettus Hill (the latter with the small white church and the Greek flag on top). Both are visible from most parts of the city.

Cuisine

Greek cuisine, rich in vegetables, is considered to be very healthy as well as mouthwatering. Dishes like *kokinisto* (veal in tomato sauce), *mousakas* (baked layers of eggplant, minced meat and potatoes topped with cheese), and *fassolada* (a hearty bean soup with tomatoes, onions, carrots and celery) provide a delicious experience for travelers. *Pasta* means pastry – not noodles – in Greek, which will come in handy when you want to try desserts like the wonderful *galaktaboureko,* a rich pastry filled with custard, cream and syrup.

Drinking Water

Tap water is safe to drink in Athens, but outside the city, drink bottled water. You may want to bring a water bottle or canteen for sightseeing excursions.

Laundry Service

Laundry service and dry cleaning are available through your hotel for an additional fee.

Local Transportation

The Athens Metro has been dramatically improved and expanded in the recent years imaking it one of the most modern and efficient systems in the world. It has 3 lines, which are distinguished by the colors used in maps and signs (green, blue and red). The green line, which is the oldest and for the most part runs on the ground, connects Piraeus to Kifissia. The blue line runs from Monastiraki to Doukissis Plakentias and the Eleftherios Venizelos International Airport, and the red line from Aghios Antonios to Aghios Dimitrios. The first train of the day departs at 5:30 am and the last departs at 12:10 am.

There are many taxis in Athens, which can be recognised by the yellow colour of the vehicles. The minimun charge is 3 Euros. The taxi fare between the airport and the city center is roughly 35 Euros during the day and 50 Euros at night. Radio equipped taxis are available for a small extra fee.

10. DEMOGRAPHICS

Turkey

Area: 301,382 square miles
Capital: Ankara
Government: Republican parliamentary democracy
Languages: Turkish is the dominant language in the Turkic language group, which also includes such lesser-known tongues as Kirghiz, Kazakh, and Azerbaijani.
Location: Turkey occupies the Asian peninsula of Anatolia (Asia Minor) and a tiny corner of the European peninsula of Thrace. These two regions form a land bridge, which is interrupted by a narrow waterway called the Bosporus. To the west, Turkey is bordered by the Aegean Sea, Greece, and Bulgaria; to the east, by Georgia, Armenia, and Iran; on the north, by the Black Sea; and to the south, by the Mediterranean Sea, Syria, and Iraq. While most of Turkey is in Asia, because of her membership in the Council of Europe she is regarded as a European country.
Geography: Turkey is relatively big (larger than Texas) and has a varied geography. Many visitors come to Turkey expecting to find mostly dusty deserts, palm trees, and camel caravans, when in fact its diverse landscape also includes lots of craggy snowcapped mountains, gentle hills, broad lakes, cool pine forests, and miles of white beaches.
Largest City: Istanbul
Population (2011 estimate): 76,805,524
Religion: Turkey is a secular state; 99.8% of the people are Muslim (mostly Sunni)
Time Zone: Turkey goes by Eastern European time: two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time, or seven hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time. When it is noon in Turkey, it’s 5 am in New York, and 2 am in Los Angeles. In the warm months from late March through late September, Turkish clocks are turned ahead one hour for daylight saving time.

Holidays:

01/01	New Year's Day
04/23	National Sovereignty and Children's Day
05/01	Labor and Solidarity Day
05/19	Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth and Sports Day
08/07	Ramadan Feast
08/08	Ramadan Feast Day 1
08/09	Ramadan Feast Day 2
08/10	Ramadan Feast Day 3
08/30	Victory Day
10/14	Sacrifice Feast (half day holiday)
10/15	Sacrifice Feast Day 1
10/16	Sacrifice Feast Day 2
10/17	Sacrifice Feast Day 3
10/18	Sacrifice Feast Day 4
10/28	Republic Day (half day holiday)
10/29	Republic Day

Historical Overview

Early History
The earliest known inhabitants of the area now known as Turkey were the Hittites. In the time before Christ, Asia Minor, as it was then called, served as a crossroads between the great civilizations of Europe and Asia. It is an ancient land with important archeological sites. Early Hittite civilization rivaled that of the Egyptians and Babylonians in terms of culture, arts, and mathematical achievements. The Hittite kingdom was conquered, however, by the Assyrians, Greeks, and Romans, respectively. Asia Minor became a Roman colony around 100 BC. In 330 AD, the city of Byzantium became Constantinople, when the Roman Emperor Constantine made it his capital and converted to Christianity.
From the fourth through most of the eleventh centuries, the area was the heart of the Byzantine, or Eastern Roman, Empire. Under Byzantine rule, Asia Minor flourished as a hub of the Christian faith as well as one of the world's most important trade centers. However, by the 11th century AD, Byzantine power had declined, and an army of Seljuk Turks invaded Asia Minor from Central Asia, bringing the new faith of Islam with them.

The Reign of the Seljuks
The Seljuks established a power base in Anatolia – a control center for their military conquests in Syria, Palestine, and portions of the waning Byzantine Empire, which was, at the time, the political center of the Christian faith.

The pope responded by waging a holy war against the Seljuks, who endured seven brutal crusades over the next two centuries.

Despite being under constant attack from European Christians, the Seljuks were able to keep their land holdings until the late 13th century — but their reign would soon come to an end. Interestingly, the Seljuk Empire would not be replaced by its European enemies but by warriors from their ancestral homeland of Turkistan. Forced by the Mongols to leave central Asia, the Ottoman Turks first entered the service of the Seljuks.

The Ottomans Seize Control
At the end of the 13th century, however, Turkish leader Othman I founded the Ottoman Dynasty in the Bursa region. Through a series of carefully crafted treaties, the Ottomans began building a small empire that eventually stretched into Eastern Europe.

To build their army for conquest, Ottoman rulers conscripted the smartest and strongest boys among their Christian subjects and schooled them in the Muslim faith, as well as the ways of war. During the next 300 years, this army would become the most feared force in both Europe and Central Asia.

The Ottoman Empire reached its peak in the mid-16th century under the Emperor Suleiman the Magnificent. After its capture in 1453, Constantinople became Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire. By then the empire had grown to include Egypt, Syria, Arabia, Mesopotamia, Tripoli, Greece, the Balkans, and most of Hungary. At that point, however, Ottoman expansion essentially stopped, except for the acquisition of Cyprus in 1571 and Crete in 1669.

By late in the 17th century, successful opposition by Christian countries began. Through wars and revolts over the next two centuries, the Turks lost Hungary, Bulgaria, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Tripoli, Albania, and Macedonia. As an ally of Germany in World War I, they also lost Syria, Arabia, Mesopotamia, and authority over Egypt.

The Birth of a Nation
In response to the Greek occupation of Izmir in 1919, the Turks established a nationalist congress with Mustafa Kemal, later known as Kemal Ataturk, as its president. Kemal established a provisional government in opposition to the Allied-controlled government in Istanbul. He led his Turkish armies to victory against the Italians, French and Greeks, who were finally expelled from Turkey in 1922. The Treaty of Lausanne ended the conflict in 1923 and Turkey was recognized as an independent republic. Kemal was recognized as republic's first president. He ruled the country until his death in 1938 and reshaped Turkey. His title Ataturk translates as "Father of the Turks."
It is said his political policy was "consistent and radical Westernization." He introduced a new legal code. He reduced the influence of Islam in Turkey by abolishing Islamic law, stripping religious leaders of their power and giving equal rights to women. Under Ataturk, the alphabet changed from Arabic to Latin, and the Gregorian calendar was accepted. He then set out to industrialize the economy under a system of state socialism. After his death, his party remained in power until Turkey's first free elections were held in 1950.

After World War II, Turkey furthered relations with Western Europe by joining the United Nations, moving toward open, democratic political institutions, and increasing individual liberties. However, economic difficulties led to a military coup in 1960, followed by the adoption of a new constitution in 1961. This led to a series of civilian governments until 1971, when Prime Minister Suleiman Demirel was forced to resign in the face of strikes, student unrest, and opposition from extremists on both the left and the right. The nation struggled to find its political identity for the next decade, alternating between civilian and military rule.

In 1982, partly due to international pressure, a new constitution was adopted and, in 1983, political parties were restored. After that, Turkey began strengthening its western ties and, during the Gulf War, supported U.N. forces. During the 1990s, economic and political instability led to a lack of foreign investment in Turkey, but recent government policies promise a brighter economic future.

Turkey Today – The Land and the People
Turkey's interior is a high, arid plateau bordered in the north and south by rugged mountains. The country has a Mediterranean climate of dry, hot summers and mild, pleasant winters. The Turkish people welcome visitors.

Turkey is a largely Muslim country; however, Islam is neither the state religion, nor the basis of Turkish law. In fact, in most respects, Turkey resembles a modern, westernized nation, with large, cosmopolitan cities, a strong industrial base and equal rights for women under the law. The literacy rates for women and men, however, aren't equal. As of 1995, 91.7 percent of men over 15 could read and write. Only 72.4 percent of the women could. And, while Turkey does seek to become a full-functioning part of the European Union, it has to overcome some obstacles to do so.

The country's unique geographic position between Europe and Asia results in a rich blending of cultural influences, including Persian, Celtic, Roman, Arabic, and Seljuk. Most of Turkey's 72 million residents are ethnic Turks, but about 20 percent of the population is Kurdish. About one half of the Turkish population lives in the four largest cities—Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, and Adana.

Greece

Area: 50,942 square miles
Capital: Athens
Language: Greek is the official language.
Largest City: Athens
Location: The ancient nation of Greece is the land terminus of southeastern Europe. Its mountainous mainland borders Albania, the former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia, Bulgaria, and the small continental portion of Turkey. It spreads between the Ionian Sea on the west, the Aegean Sea on the east, and the Sea of Crete to the south. In these surrounding seas are the more than 3,000 islands, only some of which are inhabited. With its island territory, Greece encompasses 50,942 miles and is actually larger than it appears, exceeding its neighbor Bulgaria in size.
Population (2005 est.): 10,668,354
Religion: Eastern (Greek) Orthodoxy is the major religion.
Time Zone: Greece is in the same time zone as Eastern Europe—seven hours ahead of Eastern Standard **Time.** When it's noon in New York, it's 7 pm in Athens
.
Holidays:

01/01	New Year's Day
01/06	Epiphany
03/18	Clean Monday
03/25	Independence Day
05/01	Labor Day
05/03	Orthodox Good Friday
05/06	Orthodox Easter Monday
06/24	Holy Spirit Monday
08/15	Dormition of the Holy Virgin (Assumption Day)
10/28	The Ochi day
12/25	Christmas Day
12/26	Second Day of Christmas

ATHENS, CAPITAL OF "THE CRADLE OF CIVILIZATION," is the site of the greatest achievements of the classical age of Greece. Its architectural, social, artistic, and political triumphs have become a universal legacy. Against its ancient standards are measured the cultural, intellectual, and spiritual development of all Western civilizations. The appeal of Athens to today's traveler, therefore, is not so much its modern attractions, but the allure of its extraordinary ancient sites.

The Greek history extends as far back as 3000 B.C. with the Minoan civilization of Crete. By 1600 B.C., there were Mycenaean settlements on the mainland. Then about 1100 B.C., a Greek speaking tribe called the Dorians settled in and blended with the people in the existing Greek cities. This period lasted about 100 years. Around 800 B.C, in connection with the Phoenicians, the Greek alphabet came into being. Homer learned it and then used it to translate his works onto stone. Among the earliest literary texts written in the Greek alphabet are Homer's Iliad and Odyssey. After this Aristocratic Age (800 to 600 B.C.) came the threat of the Persian Wars, which continued from 520 to 480 B.C.

From 480 to 430 B.C., the grand era known as the Classical Age, Athens and the whole of Greece experienced the peak of its ancient glories. It was during this period that the Parthenon was built under Pericles's rule; Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides were writing their plays; and Socrates and Plato were teaching.

Shortly thereafter, however, Greece was repeatedly conquered and dominated by foreign powers. Though the early rulers were relatively benign, Athens lost the freedom and democratic structure that had nurtured its greatest cultural accomplishments. First unified by the Macedonians (360 B.C. to 300 B.C.) and later conquered by the Romans (200 B.C. to A.D. 300), Athens remained an important seat of learning until the Edict of Justinian closed the schools of philosophy in A.D. 529. Under Byzantine rule (A.D. 300–1200), many temples were modified to Christian use, and Athens became somewhat of a provincial city. After the fall of Constantinople in 1453, the Ottomans seized the city and ruled for almost 400 years, during which time the most sacred sites of the Acropolis were damaged and desecrated. Athens became the capital of a liberated Greece after the end of the War of Independence in 1834.

The country was ruled as a monarchy until 1967, when former King Constantine fled Greece after failing to topple the dictatorship established earlier in the year. In 1974, five months after the restoration of democracy in Greece, the monarchy was formally abolished by plebiscite in favor of a republic. On January 1, 1981, Greece became the 10th member of the European Union. In 2004 Athens hosted the summer Olympic games.

11. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Books, Maps, and Movies

If your local store or library doesn't stock the books or movies below, the Internet offers a wide variety of options for finding older or rare stock – try AbeBooks (abebooks.com), Alibris (albris.com), Amazon (amazon.com) or Barnes & Noble (bn.com) — or any of the smaller websites. Of course, this selection is not meant to be comprehensive, and is offered as a starting point for your research.

Culture Shock: Turkey by Arin Bayataroglu (Travel Account)
A humorous paperback that concisely describes the Turkish people and their customs. Filled with great insight and charm.

The Emergence of Modern Turkey by Bernard Lewis (History)
A scholarly work covering Turkey's history from 1850 to 1950, with a few chapters on the earlier history of the Turks. It offers insight into the cultural and historical origins of modern Turkey.

The End of the Ottoman Empire 1908-1923 by A. L. MacFie (History)
MacFie's history provides solid coverage of the Allied defeat of the empire, which then splintered into some 30 independent states.

The Fall of Constantinople, 1453 by Steven Runciman (History)
This work is regarded as one of the best accounts of the conquest of Constantinople and final days of the Byzantine Empire.

History of the Byzantine State by George Ostrogorsky (History)
The book is highly praised for its clearly written, concise, yet thorough coverage—which encompasses 1,000 years of Byzantium.

Innocents Abroad by Mark Twain (Memoir)
Any traveler going to Turkey will enjoy reading what Mark Twain had to say about his visit over a century ago. Only part of this humorous book deals with Turkey, but that part is must reading. Turkey has changed, but you'll recognize vestiges of the old country as described by Twain.

The Ottoman Centuries: The Rise and Fall of the Turkish Empire by Lord Kinross (History)
A very readable history of the empire, with emphasis on sultans, court life, and Turkish battles.

A Traveler's History of Turkey by Richard Stoneman (History)
A history that concentrates on the pre-Ottoman period, with smaller coverage allotted to the Ottoman and Ataturk eras.

Turkey Unveiled: A History of Modern Turkey by Hugh and Nicole Pope (History)
Written by two journalists, this is a serious narrative history of the growth of Turkey in the aftermath of World War I and the powerful presidency of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk.

Turkish Reflections: A Biography of a Place by Mary Lee Settle (Travel Writing)
An award-winning author offers an intimate portrait of a Turkey rarely seen. The *New York Times Book Review* describes Settle's cross-country odyssey as "a diverting mixture of travelogue, history, polemic and contemporary portrait."

Turkish Odyssey: A Traveler's Guide to Turkey and Turkish Culture by Serif Yenen Istanbul: Meander Publishing, 2001. (Travel Writing)
Written by a Turk, this traveler's handbook is an encyclopedic collection of all things Turkish, from daily customs and rituals to festivals and beliefs. Sections on religion, culture, state policies, history, and geography are followed by descriptive information on Istanbul and Marmara region, the Aegean and Mediterranean coasts and central Anatolia. Includes over 300 color photos, illustrations and maps.
Author Serif Yenen has worked for years in his homeland as a professional tour guide. His cultural insights are unrivaled.

Mehmed the Conqueror and His Time by Franz Babinger (History)
A biography of Mehmed II, known as the Conqueror, who established himself as leader of Islam by capturing Constantinople. He ruled from 1451 – 81.

Alexander's Path by Freya Stark (Travel Writing)
Intrigued by the extraordinary journey of Alexander the Great 2,200 years before, Freya Stark traces the path once taken by Alexander through Turkey, from caria to Cilicia, on his way to defeat Darius. This book is a Portrait of Turkey, its people and history, and of Alexander, the brilliant explorer.

Pawn in Frankincense by Dorothy Dunnett (novel)
An acclaimed historical novel set during the time of the Ottoman Empire, featuring such characters as Suleyman the Magnificient and Roxelana.

Mehmed, My Hawk by Yashar Kemal (Novel)
Kemal is Turkey's leading novelist. This novel portrays the village life in early feudal Anatolia. The story focuses on Memed, a young man who is brought up as a serf to a vindictive overlord and escapes to become a rebel and bandit hero.

Snow by Orhan Pamuk (Novel)
One of Turkey's most popular novelists, Pamuk tells the tale of a Turkish poet who spent 12 years as a political exile in Germany, then returns to witness the clash between radical Islam and Western ideals. In Pamuk's words, the point of writing the book was to remind readers "that what they call a terrorist is first of all a human being."

A Concise History of Greece by Richard Clogg (History)
An introductory, illustrated history of modern Greece, from the late 18th-century national movement to the present.

The Legacy of Greece: A New Appraisal edited by M. I. Finley (Culture)
A collection of essays on all aspects of Greek civilization, from politics and philosophy to myth, arts, and influences on Christianity.

Atlas of the Greek World by Peter Levi (History)
Levi traces the history and culture of Greece from Minoan times to the Roman conquest. Includes abundant maps, photographs, and drawings.

Ours Once More; Folklore, Ideology and the Making of Modern Greece by Michael Herzfeld (Culture)
An excellent scholarly ethnographic introduction to the construction of modern Greek culture by an Associate Professor of Anthropology and Semiotics at Indiana University, Bloomington.

The Colossus of Maroussi by Henri Miller (Fiction)
A book about the changes taking place in Greece during the thirties. The author cleverly delves into the lives of the poor living in Athens's Syntagma Square.

Guidebooks:
Your Program Director will be happy to provide recommendations and suggestions during the trip, so a guidebook is not a necessity. But a good one can be invaluable as a one-stop reference, so for those travelers who have asked for suggestions, we offer these guidelines. Since different guidebook series each have their own target audience and structure, it is well worth your time to browse your local library or bookstore to find the one(s) you like best. To get you started, here is some general information on the most popular series:

Culture Smart! – Focuses on local customs and etiquette instead of sights, dining, etc.
DK Eyewitness – Innovative visuals make these books easy to use and a nice souvenir once the trip is over. The focus is primarily on the sights and activities.
Fodor's – A classic guidebook with strong information on activities, shopping, and dining. Good mix of upscale recommendations and budget suggestions.
Frommer's – A comprehensive guide series that is known for its restaurant recommendations.
Insight – Offers more information on history and culture than usual, nice visuals, good maps.
Lonely Planet – Practical guides geared towards a more adventurous traveler on a budget.
National Geographic – From the same company that publishes the magazine. Excellent photographs, good information on history, nature, and culture.
Rough Guides –For the independent traveler on a budget. Particularly known for their maps.

Maps:
Most hotels will provide maps free of charge at the reception desk or in your room. These maps are usually sufficient for our travelers, but if you plan on any independent exploration, you may wish to consider purchasing a map before your departure. This can be especially useful in a country that doesn't use the Roman alphabet as the hotel maps may only be printed in the local language.

Some recommended map series include: Rand McNally international maps (especially the StreetWise series), Insight's FlexiMaps, and Rough Guide's destination maps. We suggest that you visit your local bookstore or library to get a better sense of which type of map is best for your needs before making a purchase.

Suggested Movies
Here are few of our favorite movies that are about, or set in, or from the region you'll be traveling. Most are available at movie rental stores and websites—or even your public library. Sometimes films produced outside of the US may be harder to find, but they are usually available online.

Turkey, Greece

Topkapi starring Melina Mercouri, Maximillian Schell, and Peter Ustinov (1964, color) A heist film about the theft of a jeweled dagger from the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul.

Crossing the Bridge: The Sound of Istanbul directed by Fatih Akin (2005, color) A Turkish documentary about the music scene in Istanbul that was screened at the Cannes Film Festival.

Midnight Express starring Brad Davis and Irene Miracle (1978, color) Based on the real experiences of an American tourist who was caught smuggling hashish out of Turkey. This is a famous film that has been referenced and parodied many times, but the harsh prison scenes can be hard to take.

Istanbul starring Errol Flynn and Cornell Borchers (1957, color) A suspected jewel thief returns to Istanbul and finds the woman he loved might still be alive.

Bliss starring Ozgu Namal, Murat Han, and Talat Bulut (2007, color) A gorgeous and surprising look at a difficult and controversial subject. When a young woman in an extremely traditional village is suspected of sexual relations outside of marriage, one of her distant cousins is recruited to commit an "honor killing", but ends up trying to protect his potential victim instead. In Turkish with subtitles.
Walking the Bible hosted by David Feiler (2006, color) Originally aired as a series on PBS, the engaging host sets out in search of the places mentioned in the first five books of the Bible. His journey includes Egypt, Syria, and Eastern Turkey. Recommend even for the non-religious.

Zorba the Greek starring Anthony Quinn, Alan Bates, Lila Kedrova, and Irene Papas (1964, color) Based on the novel by the same name, this film centers on Basil, a half-Greek Englishman and his friendship with Zorba, a larger-than-life peasant musician.

Shirley Valentine starring Pauline Collins and Tom Conti (1989, color) An unappreciated British housewife accepts an invitation to travel to Greece with a friend, and finds the escape she's been looking for.

My Life in Ruins starring Nia Vardalos, Richard Dreyfuss, and Alexis Georgoulis (2009, color) A romantic comedy about a tour guide set among the ruins of classical Greece. Nia Vardalos also wrote and starred in My Big Fat Greek Wedding, a 2002 comedy based on her own wedding. Although it takes place in Chicago among Greek-Americans Wedding gives a good sense of Greek cultural pride. (Plus it's very funny.)

Never on Sunday starring Melina Mercourt and Jules Dassin (1960, black and white) A Classics scholar tries to steer a Greek call girl towards a moral life in this modern take on the Pygmalion myth. In Greek and English.

The Guns of Navarone starring Gregory Peck, David Niven, and Anthony Quinn (1961, color) Follows six Allied and Greek soldiers as they try to disable the two German guns that are preventing the evacuation of British troops from a Greek island in WWII. But the real heavy artillery is the cast—Peck, Niven, and Quinn all won at least one Oscar each during their distinguished careers.

Grand Circle Community & Useful Websites

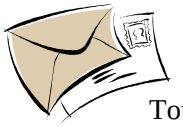
If you have access to the Internet, the following sites offer a wealth of information:

Visit the Grand Circle Community website for a world of travel news and information:
www.gct.com/community

Government websites:
International health information: CDC (Centers for Disease Control)
www.cdc.gov/travel
U.S. Customs & Border Protection: traveler information
www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel
Transportation Security Administration (TSA): agency responsible for screening luggage in U.S.
www.tsa.gov/public
National Passport Information Center (NPIC): for passport information
www.travel.state.gov

General travel information websites:
Travel books
www.amazon.com
www.barnesandnoble.com
World weather
www.intellicast.com
www.weather.com
Foreign languages for travelers: basic terms in more than 80 languages
www.travlang.com/languages
Travel tips: packing light, choosing luggage, etc.
www.travelite.org
Net café guide: 100s of locations around the globe
www.cybercafes.com
Electric current and plug types
www.kropla.com/electric2.htm
Foreign exchange rates
www.oanda.com/converter/classic
ATM locators
www.mastercard.com/atm for **Cirrus ATMs**
www.visa.com/pd/atm **for PLUS ATMs**

Country information:
www.turkey.org **Tourist attractions, Turkish culture, calendar of events, today's news, etc.**
www.kultur.gov.tr **Turkey Ministry of Tourism**
www.TurkishDailyNews.com **Daily newspaper online**
www.gogreece.com **Greek Tourist Board**
www.athens.world-guides.com **Athens**
www.visiteurope.com/ **Links to countries**
www.inyourpocket.com/free-instant-city-guides.html



Tourist Board Addresses

Tourist offices offer free brochures, maps, and pamphlets with information that pertains to many of your destinations. If these materials would enhance your vacation planning, you can write or call the following tourist board offices:

Turkey
Office of the Information Attaché
Turkish Consulate-General
821 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017
Telephone: 1-212-949-0160
Fax: 1-212-983-1293

Tourism Office
Turkish Embassy
2525 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20008
Telephone: 1-202-612-6700
Fax: 1-202-612-6744

Greek National Tourist Organization
645 Fifth Avenue
903, Olympic Tower
New York, NY 10022
Telephone: 1-212-421-5777
Fax: 1-212-826-6940