



TURKEY and

INLAND CAPPADOCIA

Turkey is a peninsula surrounded by three seas and many water resources within its region. It's a mountainous country with many contrasts that mirror the people and their way of life. Its location and fertile soil are probably the main reason that archaeological finds continue to date it back to the cradle of civilization. Agriculture and trade still dominate the economy. It's hard to comprehend the impact of the world's history that comes from this area alone. Islam has ruled the country since the fourteenth century. Istanbul is an International big city bustling with chaos and excitement. People of all faiths and attitudes live here but its CALL TO PRAYER five times a day is a strong reminder that one can only go so far in changing the rule of the faithful. Istanbul is known as the city of a thousand domes and I think; we tried to see them all. Not a place for relaxation, this city is a place for discoveries and adventures! Traveling on through the central part of Turkey, we visited the Goreme Valley in Cappadocia. There is a reason that this is a popular tourist site. The area has extremely unique land formations caused by the actions of rain, wind and volcanoes. Thousands of years and numerous Empires have settled into the soft rock mountain cliff dwellings where homes were carved and the "Fairy Chimneys" sculptures give the look of a lunar landscape. Complete with self defense routes, ventilation, stairs, tunnels, private rooms and even frescos on church walls; whole contained cities lived within these caves and inhabited the area until recently in the 50's. Cappadocia is a must sight to see! From Cappadocia we traveled south east to Mr. Nemrut...just seven miles from the Syrian border. Climbing up a steep path at a 7,200 foot elevation, usually with high winds and snow, is the only way one can see the rock sculptures resting on top of this mountain. It wasn't easy to get to but it was worth it. AWESOME! Giant stone carved heads of King Antiochus and the classical divinities of the first century are scattered about, their 30 foot bodies still sitting upright together as if to guard the tomb of this ancient King. And as if this wasn't enough, our next sight was even more magical. We flew into Ephesus known as the seventh wonder of the ancient world. The site is said to have been occupied continually since the third millennium. Archaeological finds suggest this site was inhabited as early as the 6th Century BC. Recent excavations have revealed extensive ruins including a theatre, library and a large grave site for gladiators. Other ruins uncovered show beautiful mosaics walk ways, statues, water pipes and toilets. The ruins are so intact that it's easy to see that this was a prosperous city complete with marketing, shopping and social entertainment. From Ephesus we drove



three hours to Pamukkale. Here is another unique geographical wonder to see. Known as the Cotton Castle, the pure white calcium bicarbonate deposits cascade into circular terraces and fill with the warm water of nearby thermal pools. It is a magical place for adults and children alike to enjoy. All in all, Turkey is a place filled with the ancient history of mankind through the ages. It has fantastic sites to see and a wealth of information that give it extreme significance. Today in Turkey one can better understand the history of the world from the Neolithic period to current day. It still connects the East and to the West and its vast cultural differences remain the crossroads of the world.

