




Türkiye Beyond the Euphrates: Discovering the Eastern Frontier 2026

15 MAY – 2 JUN 2026

Code: 22614

Tour Leaders **Terry Richardson**

Fitness Level 

Level 3 - Challenging

Among our most physically demanding

Journey from Gaziantep to the Black Sea visiting a variety of spectacular architecture and scenery including the World Heritage listed sites of Ani, Göbekli Tepe and Nemrut Dag.

Overview

[Terry Richardson](#), has a university background in ancient history and classical civilisation. He is also a travel writer and author of numerous guide books to Türkiye. We are delighted to announce that he joins the ASA team to lead this tour of Eastern Türkiye in 2026.

- This 19-day journey through Eastern Türkiye, which travels from Gaziantep to the Black Sea, covers a wide variety of spectacular architecture and scenery.
- Chart the history of the fascinating region of Eastern Anatolia from 10,000 BC to the present day, exploring the material culture of the ancient kingdom of Urartu, and those of the Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Armenians, Arabs, Turks, Georgians, Ottomans and modern Türkiye.
- In Gaziantep view the stunning Roman mosaics from Zeugma, a city which was a bridging point of the Euphrates river and today is largely covered by dam waters.
- From Halfeti enjoy a scenic boat trip up the Euphrates to Rumkale Fortress.
- On the mountain top of Mt Nemrut visit the tomb-sanctuary built by Antiochus I in 62 BC. We view this World Heritage Site, Nemrut Dagħ, where huge statues of the gods gaze imposingly from their remote hilltop terraces.
- Discover Göbekli Tepe, the oldest known stone temple in the world, and view Sanliurfa's magnificent archaeological complex containing numerous findings from this site.
- View the Haleplibahçe mosaics, considered among the finest examples in the Eastern World, they include four Amazon queens in hunting scenes.
- Enjoy an excursion to the Syrian Orthodox limestone monasteries of the Tur Abdin: Deyr ur Zafyan (Saffron Monastery), Mor Gabriel and Mother of God in Hah.
- Walk around the medieval hill town of Mardin formed of houses, mosques and madrasas elaborately carved from the stones of the hilltop on which it sits; and nearby Midyat known for its silver crafts called *telkari* and honey-coloured stone architecture.
- While based in Van visit the 10th century Church of the Holy Cross on Akdamar Island, the Urartian fortress-palace of Çavustepe, Van Fortress, Kurdish castle of Hosap and the Urartian temple in the fortress of Rusa II at Ayanis.
- In the foothills of Mt Ararat at Dogubayazit visit the spectacular Ishak Pasha Sarayi, a fortress palace in a mixture of Seljuk, Armenian, Georgian and Italianate styles, strategically situated on the caravan route to Persia and China.
- From Kars, investigate Ani, former capital of 10th century Armenian Bagratid princes.
- While based in Erzurum survey the town's Seljuq monuments including the madrasas of Cifte Minare and the Ulu Camii, and spend a day exploring a part of medieval Georgia with visits to the exquisite 10th century monasteries of Ösk Vank and Khakhuli.
- In Trabzon study the 13th century frescoes and frieze of the late-Byzantine church of Haghia Sophia; and in the neighbouring mountains wonder at the extraordinarily situated 4th century Sümela Monastery.

Overnight Gaziantep (2 nights) • Adiyaman (2 nights) • Sanliurfa (2 nights) • Mardin (2 nights) • Midyat (1 night) • Van (4 nights) • Kars (2 nights) • Erzurum (2 nights) • Trabzon (1 night)

Leaders



Terry Richardson

Terry Richardson has a university background in ancient history and classical civilisation. He first travelled to Turkey in 1977 and has been back countless times since then, and he also lived in southwest Turkey for around 13 years. He is the author of numerous renowned guide books on the country.

Terry's passion for Turkey began whilst he was studying Ancient History in the late 1970s, and he has been exploring this archaeology and history rich country ever since. He lived in Turkey for a decade and a half, speaks Turkish and spends much of his time researching this fascinating country. Terry was the main author of the *Rough Guide to Turkey*, wrote *The Rough Guide to Istanbul* and has contributed to many other guides, including Eyewitness and Insight. He also writes regular Turkey-related travel articles for The Telegraph newspaper. Terry first visited Eastern Turkey in the early 1980s, and its dramatic topography, remote sites and complex political, social and cultural heritage have held him in thrall ever since. He has been leading specialist tours to this incredible region for approaching 20 years. Terry joins ASA in 2026 as tour lecturer for our Eastern Turkey explorations.

Combine this tour with

Türkiye: The Ages of Anatolia 2026

24 APR – 14 MAY 2026

Uzbekistan: The Silk Road Cities 2026

21 APR – 4 MAY 2026

“Stepping Westward”: Rambles with the Poets in Wales 2026

1 MAY – 8 MAY 2026



Itinerary

The following itinerary describes daily activities which may change or be rotated and/or modified in order to accommodate alterations in opening hours, flight schedules etc. The tour includes breakfast daily, lunches & evening meals indicated in the detailed itinerary where: B=breakfast, L=lunch/picnic lunches and D=evening meals.

Gazientep - 2 nights

Day 1: Friday 15 May, Arrive Gazientep

- Tour commences at 2.00pm in the foyer of the Sirehan Hotel
- Welcome Meeting
- Orientation Walk incl. Pisirici Kasteli ve Mescidi (or Kozluca Kasteli)
- Welcome dinner

Meeting Point: The tour commences at 2.00pm in the foyer of the Sirehan Hotel. Originally a caravanserai which accommodated travellers along the Silk Route, this charming building has been converted into a boutique hotel.

Following a short welcome meeting we commence our tour with an orientation walk of the old city during which we discover the city's unique ancient water distribution system. The settlement of Gazientep, which dates back to the end of the 5th century, is located on the edge of the Alleben Stream. To avoid water shortages during summer, a complex series of underground water tunnels, referred to as *livas*, were dug into the limestone rock on which the city is built. From the *livas*, the water was directed into structures called *kastels* from where the water could be accessed. These *kastels*, located at various depths, still serve a number of functions including places for ablution, prayer, washing, and bathing. The Kastel of Pisirici, thought to be the oldest of the existing *kastels*, was constructed between 1282-83. Access to this *kastel* is via a staircase which leads to two spaces: the first area provides seating and a bathing pool, while the second space functions as a small mosque. Note: the Pisirici Kasteli is temporarily closed. If it does not

reopen by 2026 we plan to visit the Kozluca Kasteli).

This evening we enjoy a welcome dinner at one of Gaziantep's fine restaurants. (Overnight Gaziantep) D

Day 2: Saturday 16 May, Gaziantep

- Zeugma Mosaic Museum
- Bakircilar Carsisi, Elmaci Bazaar & Culinary walking tour

This morning we view the magnificent Roman mosaics and wall paintings recovered from the ancient city of Zeugma that today is largely covered by dam waters. One of the richest troves of Roman mosaics ever uncovered, this collection includes representations of the gods Poseidon, Oceanus, and Tethys. The accompanying wall paintings rival those of Pompeii. Zeugma, probably founded by one of Alexander the Great's generals, initially constituted two cities, one on either side of the Euphrates where major east, west, north and south trade routes met. The Romans therefore considered Zeugma a strategically important location for a vital military centre. They also collected tolls from merchants and travellers at this crossroad. The city attained a population of around 70,000 and wealthy merchants, military officers, governors and other notables decorated their impressive palaces and villas with magnificent mosaics covering the floors of rooms and courtyards and also used them to decorate pools. Because of Zeugma's cosmopolitan status these mosaics give vital information about the interaction and cross-fertilization of diverse ancient cultures.

Gaziantep, (formerly 'Antep') is considered Türkiye's gastronomic capital. Its cuisine is a marvellous blend of Arabic, Armenian, Kurdish and Anatolian flavours. Apart from excellent baklava and pistachio nuts there are dishes particularly favoured by the locals. The Ali Nazik kebab, for example, features juicy sliced meat on a purée of eggplant.

This afternoon we visit the Bakircilar Carsisi (Coppersmith Bazaar) and the Elmaci Bazaar, the city's largest food market which displays a wide variety of fruit, vegetables, herbs, spices and nuts – including the famous Gaziantep pistachios known as "green gold". We also enjoy a culinary walking tour which includes visits to a number of selected restaurants where we can taste different kinds of kebabs, içli köfte (kibbeh), çig köfte, lahmacun (thin pizza), baklava, katmer, etc. (Overnight Gaziantep) BL

Adiyaman - 2 nights

Day 3: Sunday 17 May, Gaziantep – Halfeti – Rumkale – Adiyaman

- Scenic boat trip from Halfeti up the Euphrates to Rumkale Fortress

This morning we drive to Halfeti on the eastern bank of the Euphrates, which replaced its older namesake submerged in the 1990s by rising waters of the Birecik Dam. From Halfeti we board a scenic cruise up the Euphrates to view the ruins of the fortress of Rumkale (Arabic: Qal'at al-rum) dating from the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

After lunch at a local restaurant we follow the Euphrates north past the Ataturk Dam to the Adiyaman region. (Overnight Adiyaman) BLD

Day 4: Monday 18 May, Adiyaman – Arsameia – Nemrut – Adiyaman

- Roman Bridge at Cendere
- Karakus (Black Bird) Tumulus

- Arsameia on the Nymphaios
- Nemrut Dag, funerary sanctuary of King Antiochus I of Commagene (World Heritage Site)

This morning we begin with a visit to the Roman bridge at Cendere, built by the Sixteenth Roman Legion around 200 AD, and the Karakus (Black Bird) Tumulus built by King Mithridates II (36-21 BC) probably for his mother Queen Isaias, sister Princess Antiochis and iiece of Antiochus' son and successor. Most recently the tombs were revealed by a Georadar study by Ankara University.

We continue to Arsameia on the Nymphaios which lies at the foot of Mount Nemrut. It was the summer capital of the kingdom of Commagene and took its name from the kingdom's founder, Arsames. It was here that Antiochos I of Commagene (responsible for the monument on Nemrut Dag) built a *hieriothesion* (sacred last resting place) for his father, Mithridates I. The ancient ruins includes a superb stone relief portraying Mithridates I, wearing his state robes and *kitaris* (an Armenian Crown) shaking hands with Heracles.

After lunch we visit the Nemrut Dag National Park where we explore the striking Hellenistic funerary sanctuary that King Antiochus I of Commagene built on the peak of Mount Nimrod (Turkish: Nemrut Dag). Commagene was a buffer state located between the Graeco-Roman and Persian spheres of influence and was culturally influenced by both. We shall ascend Nemrut Dag to visit Antiochus I's *hieriothesion* (funerary sanctuary) that consists of a huge burial mound encircled by a processional route with three terraces upon which stand colossal statues. These portray ancestors of the Commagene kings and Greek and Persian deities. Other motifs represent the deification of Antiochus. We shall time our visit to view the colossal statues around sunset when they are at their most dramatic. In the late afternoon we return to Adiyaman. (Overnight Adiyaman) BLD

Sanliurfa - 2 nights

Day 5: Tuesday 19 May, Adiyaman – Sanliurfa

- Citadel of Sanliurfa (exterior)
- Birket Ibrahim
- Halil Rahman Mosque and Medrese Complex
- Ridvaniye Mosque
- Ulu Mosque
- Time at leisure in the Urfa Bazaar

This morning we cross the great artificial lake created by the Euphrates dam to Sanliurfa where we shall be based for the next two nights.

Situated on the great plains of Upper Mesopotamia, Sanliurfa (Urfa) is a pilgrimage town and Muslim spiritual centre. The first historical references to Urfa occur in Sumerian, Akkadian and Hittite texts that mention a Hurrian settlement called Urshu. The city was successively incorporated into the Hittite and Assyrian empires. Like Urartu, Urshu or Urfa figures in Biblical and ancient Near Eastern texts as a site of great significance, being identified as the birthplace of Abraham. Alexander the Great named the city Edessa and Graeco-Roman Edessa became a fortified town standing at the juncture of trade routes connecting Syria, Asia Minor and Mesopotamia. Christianity took root in the city during the 1st century AD and steadily gained ground as a result of the conversion of its governor. In succeeding centuries Edessa became a centre of Nestorian Christianity, a 'heresy' that dominated Eurasia for 1500 years, from Samarkand to Xian, Xanadu to Goa. A Byzantine frontier post, it was occupied sporadically by Arab forces from Syria. After the Battle of Manzikert (1071) Seljuk incursions obliged the Byzantine emperors to appeal

to Pope Urban II for assistance against the Muslims. This prompted the First Crusade, during which Baldwin de Bouillon persuaded the Christian ruler of Edessa to name him as his heir, and the resulting Crusader County of Edessa survived until 1144. The Muslim conquest of Edessa led to its initial decline. It later revived as a staging post on trade routes connecting Anatolia to the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire.

Following lunch at a local restaurant, we drive around the city, stopping at the citadel, a site originally fortified by the Hurrians of Mitanni and then by successive masters, including the Assyrians, the Romans and the Crusaders. We then continue with a walk through the old part of the city to visit the deep pool known as Birket Ibrahim ('the Pool of Abraham'), containing thousands of carp that are considered to be holy. A gleaming white colonnade and gardens surround the pool. Close by stands the Halil Rahman mosque and medrese complex, an Ottoman ensemble incorporating much earlier elements including a minaret said to date from the 8th century. Other Ottoman mosques and medreses stand nearby. We shall then visit the cave reputed to be the birthplace of Abraham, and the 12th century Ulu Mosque which was commissioned by Nur al-Din Zangi, governor of Mosul, after Edessa was recaptured from the Crusaders in 1144. The mosque's unusual octagonal minaret is possibly the bell tower of an earlier Byzantine church.

Our day ends with some at leisure for you to wander Urfa's bazaar, one of the best in southeastern Anatolia. It is a vibrant labyrinth of alleyways in which various trades and crafts are focused – copper, woodwork, tinwork and textiles. (Overnight Sanliurfa) BLD

Day 6: Wednesday 20 May, Sanliurfa – Göbekli Tepe – Sanliurfa

- Göbekli Tepe (UNESCO World Heritage Site)
- Sanliurfa Archaeology Museum & Haleplibahçe Mosaics Museum

This morning we drive up through the anti-Taurus mountains to the northeast of Sanliurfa to the extraordinary site of Göbekli Tepe which was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2018. This site features massive (up to 5 metres in height) carved megaliths (10,000 BC) that predate Stonehenge by some 6000 years, crafted and arranged by prehistoric people who had not yet developed metal tools or even pottery. Believed to be a centre of worship and the oldest known example of monumental architecture, this complex is of deep significance for our understanding of the development of the earliest human societies; finds here have revolutionized theories concerning man's initial development of agriculture, religion, and 'civilisation'.

Following lunch at a local restaurant we visit the Sanliurfa's archaeological museum which opened in 2015 and is now considered one of the best in Türkiye. Within the museum the region's cultural heritage is displayed across three levels. Exhibitions include a series of finds from the Neolithic sites around Sanliurfa, as well as a life-size reconstruction of one of the stone circles at Göbekli Tepe, along with Assyrian, Babylonian, Hittite, Neolithic, and Bronze Age artefacts.

We also visit the adjacent Haleplibahçe Mosaic Museum which houses a superb collection of in-situ late-Roman/early Byzantine mosaics that were discovered in 2006. The mosaics are considered one of the finest examples of their type in the Eastern world. The most famous mosaic depicts Amazon Hippolite, Thermodosa, Melanippe and Penthesileia hunting a lion and a leopard. Another famous mosaic depicts Orpheus sitting and playing lyre for wild animals surrounding him. (Overnight Sanliurfa) BLD

Mardin - 2 nights

Day 7: Thursday 21 May, Sanliurfa – Karahan Tepe – Viransehir – Mardin

- Karahan Tepe
- Kasimiye Medresi

We depart Sanliurfa and journey 63kms east to the remote site of Karahan Tepe, a settlement which lies on a plateau in the Tektek Mountains. Initial surveys conducted in 2000, confirmed that the settlement, like Göbekli Tepe, was in use during the Pre-Pottery Neolithic period. In addition to tools of flint and obsidian, archaeologists have uncovered a series of circular enclosures and 250 T-shaped pillars many carved with animal reliefs. Karahan Tepe and Göbekli Tepe represent two, of the eleven early settlements unearthed in the rugged stone hills surrounding Sanliurfa – collectively known as Tas Tepeler.

Mid-morning we continue east to the ancient city of Mardin that overlooks the cultivated plains of northern Syria (ancient Mesopotamia). Our journey takes us past the market town of Viransehir where we make a brief stop for lunch.

On arrival we visit the 15th century Kasimiye Medresi, entering through a magnificent Seljuk carved portal to a sublime courtyard with two storeys of arcades and a majestic *iwan*. The upper level is composed of students' cells and the roof provides wonderful panoramas of the surrounding plains, once the site of ancient Mesopotamian civilisations. (Overnight Mardin) BLD

Day 8: Friday 22 May, Mardin

- Deyr ul-Zafaran (Saffron Monastery)
- Old City of Mardin incl. Forty Martyrs Church, Sakip Sabanci Mardin City Museum, Ulu Camii (Grand Mosque) & traditional bazaar

This morning we commence our investigation of the Syrian Orthodox limestone monasteries of the Tur Abdin. Built in 439AD the Deyr ul-Zafaran monastery ('Saffron Monastery') acted, until 1932, as the seat of the patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church. Services are still held in Aramaic, the language spoken by Jesus. The complex has 365 rooms, one for each day of the year.

This afternoon we explore the medieval city of Mardin, made up of old houses, mosques and medreses elaborately carved from the stones of the hilltop on which it sits. The city's origins predate the surviving medieval architecture by centuries; its site has been inhabited since at least the 3rd millennium BC.

Our program includes a visit to the Forty Martyrs Church, a historic landmark built in 569, the traditional bazaar and the Sakip Sabanci Mardin City Museum which showcases the fascinating history and culture of Mardin. We also visit the iconic Grand Mosque (Ulu Camii) which includes numerous inscriptive plaques that suggest it was probably founded in the 11th century by the Seljuks and developed to its current state under the Artuqid rule during the late 12th century. Originally built with two minarets, currently only one remains and includes three inscriptions at the base that declare it was commissioned in 1176 by Artuqid Beg II Gazi II. (Overnight Mardin) BLD

Midyat - 1 night

Day 9: Saturday 23 May, Mardin – Tur Abdin – Midyat

- Orientation walk of Estel, Midyat incl. Hani Halk Evi and Çevre Kültür Evi
- Syrian Orthodox Monastery of St Gabriel (Dayro d-Mor Gabriel or Deyrulmur)

East of Mardin lies the charming rustic old city of Midyat. Midyat's Syriac Christian population suffered

persecution during World War I and recently much of its community has emigrated. Today Mardin has nine Syrian Orthodox churches. In the new settlement of Midyat called Estel, we visit the restored Hani Halk Evi, containing a *telkari* (metalwork shop) and the old culture house (Midyat Çevre Kültür Evi), a historic 2-storey mansion with fine, arcaded carved façades, barrel-vaulted ceilings and containing period furniture.

In the afternoon we visit the restored Mor Gabriel (St Gabriel) monastery. Founded in 397, it is the oldest surviving Syriac Orthodox monastery in the world and remains an important centre of Syrian Christian religious identity. Reputedly founded by St Samuel and St Simon, it was patronized by a number of emperors, including Arcadius (r. 395 – 408) and Honorius (r. 395 – 423), Theodosius II (408 – 450) and Anastasius (491 – 518). The complex, which is set amongst gardens and orchards, has Byzantine mosaics, well-proportioned domes, pretty cloisters, an early Belfry and fine carved decorations enlivening its fabric of Midyat limestone. It remains a working monastery dedicated to the education of local monks. (Overnight Midyat) BLD

Van - 4 nights

Day 10: Sunday 24 May, Midyat – Anitli (Hah) – Batman – Van

- Monastery of the Mother of God in Hah (Anitli)

This morning we visit the first-century monastery of the Mother of God at Anitli. The intricate stone carving of its octagonal church marks it as one of the most beautiful in the hilly Tur Abdin region. It is also one of the most important, as it served as the seat of the (first) Syriac Orthodox bishop of Tur Abdin until 613, and regained its Episcopal status from the 11th to the 13th centuries during a schism with Mor Gabriel Monastery. Although the monastery was renovated over the centuries, its church has preserved some of its original 3rd-century details making it one of the oldest churches in the world. Its early foundation is attested by a Syriac legend that 12, not 3, Magi stopped in Anitli whilst following the star to Bethlehem. Only 3 of them, carrying gifts, continued on to the birthplace of Jesus Christ. The Three Kings later returned to Anitli with a swaddling band, which they burnt in order to divide the ashes among the 12 of them. The ashes, however, were miraculously converted into 12 gold coins. The 12 kings therefore founded this church to commemorate the miraculous event.

We continue north to Batman for lunch before commencing our 284km journey to Van. Our drive takes us through the valley of Guzel Dere passing through the picturesque town of Bitlis, reputedly founded by one of Alexander's generals. Bitlis is located in a predominantly Kurdish region, and for much of the Ottoman period semi-autonomous Kurdish beys based in the city ruled the surrounding countryside. A ruined citadel still dominates the old town, which also possesses a number of Ottoman mosque complexes. We also pass through the town of Tatvan before travelling around the southern shore of the lake to Van, where we shall be based for three nights. (Overnight Van) BLD

Day 11: Monday 25 May, Van – Akdamar Island – Van

- Armenian Church of the Holy Cross, Akdamar Island
- Afternoon at leisure

This morning we drive along the coast of Lake Van and then cruise to Akdamar Island to visit the ruined 10th century Armenian church of the Holy Cross. The Church of the Holy Cross was once an important Armenian cathedral. The seat of the Armenian Orthodox patriarch, it was founded by King Gagik between 915 and 921 alongside a royal palace and monastery. Streets, gardens and terraced parks once surrounded the palace and church. The church is all that remains today. Its justly famous façades carry bas-relief

carvings and friezes of religious scenes, including Adam and Eve, Jonah and the whale, David and Goliath, Abraham and Isaac, St. George slaying a dragon, a Christ Pantocrator, and a Madonna and Child. There is an image of King Gagik presenting his church to Christ. A richly carved vine populated with animals runs around the entire church. Following lunch on the lake, the remainder of the afternoon is at leisure to explore Van. (Overnight Van) BLD

Day 12: Tuesday 26 May, Van – Güzelsu – Çavustepe – Van

- Van Museum
- Kurdish Castle of Hosap, Güzelsu
- Urartian Fortress of Sarduri II, Çavustepe

The fascinating town of Van sits on the eastern edge of Lake Van's striking blue waters surrounded by mountains on its landward side. Like many other urban sites of Eastern Anatolia, Van has been inhabited for millennia. It entered history as the Urartian capital, Tushpa. In the 6th century BC the Urartians were displaced by a number of distinct peoples, including several different Armenian lineages, who controlled Tushpa and its successor cities until the 14th century when it came under the domination of the Black Sheep Turcomen. With the rise of the Safavids of Iran in the late 15th and early 16th centuries, Van became a Safavid city but was conquered by Süleyman the Magnificent and incorporated into the Ottoman Empire.

We begin this morning with a visit to the Van Museum which features a wealth of archaeological material from around the region. Among the most spectacular objects on display are those from the Kingdom of Urartu. These include artefacts from the fortress and temple complex of Ayanais: a helmet, shield, and the 'Sacred Spear of Haldi'. Another room is dedicated to the fine, bronze horse and chariot equipment, weapons, and armour of the people of Urartu, who were master horsemen and charioteers.

Mid-morning we journey 63kms south-east to the magnificent Hosap Castle, perched photogenically on top of a rocky outcrop alongside the village. Built in 1643 by a local Kurdish chieftain, Mahmudi Süleyman, the castle has a very impressive entrance gateway surmounted by superb lion reliefs. Access from the village to the castle is via a 17th century three-arched stone bridge built in courses of black and white stone, a style associated with Ottoman buildings in the district and in Upper Mesopotamia.

The afternoon will be spent at Çavustepe continuing our study of the Urartu civilizations. The citadel of Çavustepe is the ancient Sardurihinili, founded by Urartian King Sarduri II who reigned between 764 and 735 BC. The main gate stands at the point of junction between the lower and the upper citadel. The upper excavations have revealed a large platform and a temple dedicated to the great Urartian god Haldi. In the lower parts, remains of 4- 5 metre-high walls, a palace, warehouses, workshops, stalls and inscriptions in cuneiform scripts can be seen. In addition to the temple, excavations have also revealed an altar, storage areas, a water system and a royal palace. (Overnight Van) BLD

Day 13: Wednesday 27 May, Van – Ayanis – Van

- Urartian temple in the fortress of Rusa II (c 685-645BC) at Ayanis
- Van Fortress Tushpa (Van Kalesi/Fortress of Van)

Early this morning we visit Ayanis, the Urartian fortress of Rusa II (c.685 – 645 BC) located close to Lake Van. An outer town surrounds the fortress, built on an ancient road leading from the capital city of Tushpa (Van) to Erci in the north. The extensive size of the Ayanis fortress, clearly demonstrates that Urartu was a powerful kingdom in the reign of Rusa, son of Argishti (7th century BC).

This afternoon we visit Van Kalesi, a spectacular Urartian site. This impressive fortress is built on a narrow limestone outcrop overlooking Lake Van. Built by the Urartians around 800 BC, this citadel is 1800 metres long, 120 metres wide and sits 80 metres above the lake; the Urartians carved 1001 steps in the rock leading up to their fortress. The elevated site, which commands a huge vista, is typical of the places favoured by the Urartians for their strongholds. It was also the site of their temple, of which only some arched niches in the stone remain. (Overnight Van) BLD

Kars - 2 nights

Day 14: Thursday 28 May, Van – Mt Ararat – Dogubayazit – Kars

- Mt. Ararat foothills
- Turkish Palace of Ishak Pasha Sarayi, Dogubeyazit

From Van we skirt the foothills of snow-clad Mount Ararat, known in Turkish as Agri Dag, the highest mountain in Türkiye and a site of great religious significance as the resting place of Noah's Ark. Our first stop is Dogubayazit, which stands at the foot of the mountain. Here lies the spectacular Ishak Pasha Sarayi, a fortress palace that commands panoramic views of the plain and once controlled the frontier with Persia through which the Silk Route passed. In the 18th century the local Ottoman governor, Ishak Pasha, invested large amounts of time and money in the citadel's reconstruction. This morning we visit this palace-complex that includes a mosque, living quarters, public areas and a mausoleum. The strategic value of this region has meant that forts have stood here for millennia. The Urartians, who also built tombs that can still be seen in the rocky hillside, erected the earliest citadels. Many centuries later a Mongol lineage constructed a new citadel on the hillside, possibly on the site of an earlier Genoese fort. The Mongol citadel was taken over by the Ottomans, who used it to monitor the plain, linking Ottoman and Safavid territories.

In the afternoon we drive up through pastureland following the Armenian border north to plateaus with spectacular mountain vistas. Our destination is Kars, a city frequently fought over by the Ottomans and Russians in the early modern era and now located near the Turkish border with Georgia. (Overnight Kars) BLD

Day 15: Friday 29 May, Kars – Ani – Kars

- Ruined Armenian City of Ani
- Armenian Church of the Holy Apostles (Kümbet Mosque), Kars
- Seljuk Castle, Kars
- Ulu Cami, Kars

Today we visit the fascinating town of Ani, the ruined capital of a medieval Armenian kingdom located on the contemporary Turkish-Armenian border. Ani is situated on a triangular rocky outcrop bounded on two sides by steep river gorges. Originally the site of a fort, Ani became a town in the 8th century and an Armenian capital in the 10th century. As the city grew, the Armenians decided to close off the third side of the triangle with a line of walls to protect it. In the 11th century Ani came under Seljuk rule, but was regained by the Armenians in the 12th century. The city continued to be inhabited until the 16th century when earthquakes and Ottoman-Safavid rivalry persuaded the population to abandon it. At the height of its splendour Ani possessed perhaps as many as 1000 churches and chapels, as well as the citadel of the Armenian kings. When the Seljuks captured the city they added mosques to the urban fabric. After the abandonment of the site, only the most resilient buildings survived, crumbling slowly as time passed. Today its walls, towers and minarets retain many of their foundation inscriptions, and its ruined churches and cathedral display the variety and quality of Armenian architecture.

This afternoon we shall tour the city of Kars to view its eclectic mix of Russian, Armenian and Turkish architecture. The Russians rebuilt the centre of the city in the 19th century in the style of late Tsarist Russia. Although Kars is an ancient urban centre, little remains of the antique and medieval city except the castle and the Church of the Holy Apostles, an Armenian church constructed in the 10th century for the Bagratid King Abas. Reliefs representing the 12 Apostles and Maltese Crosses remain on its façades. It was converted into a mosque in 1064 when the Seljuks conquered Kars, then used as a Russian Orthodox church as the city changed hands in the late 19th century. Currently it is used as a Turkish mosque under the name Kümbet Mosque. Nearby we also visit the Seljuk Castle which provides wonderful views of the city and the 17th century Ulu Cami, Kars's largest Ottoman mosque. (Overnight in Kars) BLD

Erzurum - 2 nights

Day 16: Saturday 30 May, Kars – Erzurum

- Çobandede Bridge
- Seljuk Ulu Camii
- Çifte Minareli Medrese
- Yakutiye Medrese
- Seljuk Kümbets
- Rustem Pasha Bedestan
- Erzurum Museum

This morning we travel west through the Aladaglar Mountains, crossing the Aras River over the beautiful six-arched Çobandede bridge before reaching Erzurum. Erzurum stands on the great east-west trade route at an historical point of intersection between the peoples of Asia Minor, the Caucasus and Mesopotamia. In the Byzantine era Erzurum, known then as Theodosiopolis, stood between Byzantium, Armenia and Persia. Later, Byzantines and Muslim Arabs competed for its possession. It was finally captured by the Seljuk Turks in the late 11th century after the Byzantine defeat at the battle of Manzikert (1071) opened Anatolia to Turkish colonization. The Seljuks built extensively in Erzurum, endowing the city with mosques, medreses and the distinctive cone-shaped mausoleums known as *kümbets*. In Ottoman times, Erzurum again found itself on the frontier, as the Safavids of Persia tried to expand westwards into Anatolia, but the city was secured after Selim I's early 16th century campaigns against the Persian dynasty.

We shall begin our tour of Erzurum with visits to the city's most important Seljuk buildings, the Ulu Mosque, the Çifte Minareli Medrese, and the Yakutiye Medrese. The earliest of these buildings, the Ulu Mosque, was constructed in 1179, and is one of the oldest Seljuk mosques in existence. The Çifte Minareli Medrese dates to 1253. The 'medrese', or theological college, was a Seljuk invention developed in Baghdad in the late 11th century to promote the spread of Islamic orthodoxy in Seljuk domains and to counter the Shi'ism of the Egyptian Fatimids. The medreses provided a space in which its students could live, study and pray. In order to achieve this the Seljuks combined Turkic, Persian and Syrian architectural forms into a structure of which the Çifte Minareli Medrese is an example. The medrese's monumental portal, surmounted by fluted minarets decorated with glazed brick and tile is derived from the Turco-Persian tradition, whilst an arched colonnade of Syrian inspiration surrounds its central courtyard. Teaching and prayer took place in the medrese's *iwans*, the large niches at the centre of each side. Our third building, the Yakutiye Medrese, was built in 1308 by the Mongol ruler of Persia, Uljaytu, and is noteworthy for its finely carved stone portal.

We also visit the Seljuk *kümbets* and the Rustem Pasha Bedestan, a covered market commissioned by Süleyman the Magnificent's chief minister, Rustem Pasha. Originally a market for luxury goods, the Bedestan now serves as a workshop for local silver and jet jewellery. Nearby the Erzurum Museum displays artefacts from the region including fine pieces from the Urartian, Hellenistic, Roman and Ottoman periods.

(Overnight Erzurum) BLD

Day 17: Sunday 31 May, Erzurum – Çamliyamaç – Bagbasi – Erzurum

- Ösk Vank, Çamliyamaç village
- Khakhuli Monastery, Haho/Bagbasi village

This morning we drive north along the Georgian Valley and visit two wonderful 10th century Georgian monasteries in unforgettable settings, Ösk Vank in Çamliyamaç village, and Khakhuli Monastery in Haho/Bagbasi village. Known as Tao-Klarjeti, this area was an important part of medieval Georgia, ruled by the Bagratid kings. David the Great of Georgia founded both monasteries: Khakhuli, an important literary centre, retains its cross-dome triple-apsed church, with fine relief carvings and frescoes still surviving. The Ösk Vank Church (Oshki in Georgian) is regarded as one of the most important historical structures in the eastern Anatolian region and draws thousands of Georgian pilgrims to Erzurum every year. The church's three chapels, a dining hall and a library building have survived to this day. It is the biggest Georgian church in the region built in a cross shape. After the occupation of the region by the Byzantine Empire in 1022, Byzantium emperors Basileos and Constantine XIII restored the church's ruined dome. Historical documents reveal that the church, which was one of the Episcopal centres of the region, was also an important cultural centre, known particularly for its manuscripts, between the 11th and 15th centuries. (Overnight Erzurum) BLD

Trabzon - 1 night

Day 18: Monday 1 June, Erzurum – Bayburt – Sumela Monastery – Trabzon

- Bayburt Fortress (exterior)
- Sumela Monastery

This morning we depart Erzurum and travel northwest to Trabzon through the wild landscapes of the north-eastern Pontus Range. Our journey takes us along the ancient silk route that connected the Black Sea coast to the Anatolian interior and Mesopotamia, a road travelled by Xenophon and many later conquerors.

Once over the 2390m Kopdagi Pass we reach the garrison town of Bayburt where Marco Polo stopped briefly on his journey to China. Here we may view the great fortress before continuing over the Zigana Pass to the dramatically situated Sumela Monastery that stands 270 metres above a rocky gorge in the Altındere National Park. Two Athenian monks, Barnabus and Sophronius, who came to be revered as saints after their deaths, founded the monastery in the 4th century. By the early 5th century Sumela was a pilgrimage centre. It is likely that the original monastic buildings were simple huts clustered around a chapel that housed the monastery's icons and relics. After the creation of the empire of Trebizond, however, Sumela was rebuilt in a grander form and decorated with frescoes. The monastery continued to enjoy imperial protection, if not patronage after the fall of Trebizond to the Ottomans (1461), and functioned throughout the Ottoman period as a pilgrimage centre for both Christians and Muslims. In the 19th century the monastery was rebuilt and extended but the Russian invasion during World War I and the creation of the Turkish Republic after the war led to the departure of the monks for Greece. After climbing up to the monastery and viewing its 14th and 18th century frescoes we shall continue our journey north to Trabzon. (Overnight Trabzon) BLD

Day 19: Tuesday 2 June, Trabzon, tour ends

- Byzantine church of Hagia Sophia, Trabzon
- Covered Bazaar (time permitting)

- Transfer to Trabzon Airport

Modern Trabzon stands on the site of Trebizond, a city founded in the 7th century BC by Ionian colonists from the Aegean. The colony, known at that time as Trapezus, formed one link in a chain of Ionian colonies that channelled goods from the Near East westwards. In succeeding centuries Trapezus became part of the Greek-speaking kingdom of Pontus, whose kings led Greek resistance to the Romans in Asia Minor until the mid 1st century BC. Pontus then became a Roman client kingdom, a Roman province, and a Byzantine province in succession. After the Muslim conquest of Greater Syria (7th century AD), Trapezus and neighbouring Armenia found themselves on the Christian-Muslim frontier. In the 11th century the city was subjected to Seljuk raids but soon came into its own as the capital of the Byzantine Empire of Trebizond. This Empire was founded in 1204 by Alexios Komnenos, grandson of the last Komnene Emperor, Andronikus I Komnenos, who had been deposed by Isaac II Angelus. Thenceforth the Empire of Trebizond, encompassing the southern shores of the Black Sea, remained a competitor to the Empire in Constantinople, until the fall of the latter to Mehmet the Conqueror in 1453. The establishment of Trebizond ushered in a period of extensive rebuilding and renovation in the old city. Its walls were repaired, a grand Imperial palace built, and several churches, including the 13th century Church of Hagia Sophia were added to the urban fabric.

Trebizond survived the fall of Constantinople for 8 years until Mehmet took it too in 1461. During the previous 250 years, Trebizond had burgeoned as a wealthy trading city, especially in the 13th century under the patronage of the Mongols; at this time it was the western terminus of the Silk Road. It was in constant competition with the Seljuk and later Ottoman Turks, as well as the Genoese who attempted to dominate Black Sea trade in the 13th century.

The beautiful cross-in-square Byzantine church of Hagia Sophia was built during the reign of Manuel I (1238-1263). Below its high central dome is an opus sectile pavement of multi-coloured stones. Its fine late 13th century frescoes, revealed during an Edinburgh University restoration, illustrate New Testament themes. The stone figurative reliefs and other ornamentation on its exterior walls follow local traditions found in Georgia and Armenia.

If our timetable permits, there will be some time at leisure to wander through the bedestan, or old covered market of the city.

All good things must come to an end! Our tour ends with a coach trip to Trabzon Airport, arriving at approximately 1200hrs midday, where we must all say goodbye. **B**

Accommodation

Hotels are rated 3 to 5-star locally and are comfortable and conveniently situated. All rooms have shower or bath and w.c. Several hotels have swimming pools. Single rooms may be requested – and are subject to availability and payment of the single supplement.

- Gaziantep (2 nights): 5-star [Sirehan Hotel](#) – originally a *caravanserai* accommodating travellers along the Silk Route, this charming building has been converted into a boutique hotel.
- Adiyaman (2 nights): 4-star [Park Dedeman Adiyaman Hotel](#) – a modern comfortable hotel in the centre of town.
- Sanliurfa (2 nights): 5-star [DoubleTree by Hilton](#) – a modern hotel in the town centre.
- Mardin (2 nights): 4-star [Mardius Tarihi Hotel](#) – located in the heart of the old city. This charming boutique hotel is housed in a historical building and features a roof-top terrace offering spectacular views of the citadel.
- Midyat (1 night): 4-star [Hotel Kasr-i Nehroz](#) - a charming boutique hotel housed in 2 historical stone houses, located a few 100 metres from the Silversmith Bazaar.
- Van (4 nights): 5-star [DoubleTree by Hilton](#) – a modern hotel located on the lake offering views of the surrounding countryside.
- Kars (2 nights): 4-star [Beylerbeyi Palace](#) – a charming boutique hotel housed in a former palace.
- Erzurum (2 nights): 5-star [Hilton Garden Inn](#) - modern hotel located in the city centre.
- Trabzon (1 night): 4/5-star [Grand Zorlu Hotel](#) - a modern hotel with roof-top restaurant and views of the Black Sea; located in the city centre.

Note: Hotels are subject to change, in which case a hotel of similar standard will be provided.

Single Supplement

Payment of this supplement will ensure accommodation is for sole occupancy throughout the tour. The number of spaces available for single occupancy is extremely limited. People wishing to take this supplement are therefore advised to book well in advance.

Tour Map



Tour Price & Inclusions

AUD \$13,790.00 Land Content Only – Early-Bird Special: Book before 30 June 2025

AUD \$14,190.00 Land Content Only

AUD \$2995.00 Single supplement

Tour Price (Land Content Only) includes:

- Accommodation in twin-share rooms with private facilities in 4-5 star hotels
- Meals as indicated in the tour itinerary where: B=breakfast, L=lunch & D=evening meal
- Drinks at welcome and farewell meals. Other meals may not have drinks included.
- Transportation by air-conditioned coach
- Porterage of one piece of luggage per person at hotels
- Lecture and site-visit program
- Local guide in Turkey
- Entrance fees
- Use of audio headsets during site visits
- Tips for the coach driver, Turkish guide and restaurants for included meals.

Tour Price (Land Content Only) does not include:

- Airfare: Australia-Istanbul-Gazientep, Trabzon-Istanbul-Australia
- Evening meals & lunches not indicated in the tour itinerary
- Personal spending money
- Arrival Airport transfer
- Luggage in excess of 20 kg (44 lbs)
- Travel insurance
- Visas (if applicable)



Fitness Criteria & Practical Information

Fitness Level



Level 3 - Challenging

Among our most physically demanding

You must be able to:

- manage at least five to seven hours of physical activity per day with ease.
- walk at a regular to moderate pace; some days for at least 5-7km, over terrain which may include rocky and uneven paths, sometimes with steep inclines.
- negotiate challenging historic and archaeological sites many of which are large and unsheltered and include several flights of stairs.
- cope with a demanding tour schedule which involves longer days, regular early morning starts, long distance coach travel over variable road conditions.
- withstand varying climatic conditions such as humidity and heat.
- contend with a shower over a bath; walk-in showers may not be available at all hotels.
- manage your own luggage at some hotels.

Fitness Levels

Please also view the fitness criteria required for our tours, graded from Level 1 to Level 3, at www.asatours.com.au/fitness-level/

All ASA tours are active programs suitable for people with a good level of mental and physical fitness and good mobility. They are not suitable for people who lack stamina, have difficulty walking at the group's pace or who have mobility issues. An unavoidable aspect of every tour is the need to manage walking, stair-climbing and standing for long periods of time.

It is a condition of travel that all participants agree to accept ASA's directions in relation to their suitability

to participate in activities undertaken on the tour, and that ASA retains the sole discretion to direct a tour participant to refrain from a particular activity on part of the tour. Before enrolling on an ASA tour please read the fitness requirements carefully.

Booking Conditions

ASA RESERVATION APPLICATION FORM

Please complete the ASA RESERVATION APPLICATION and send it to Australians Studying Abroad together with your non-refundable deposit of AUD \$1000.00 per person payable to Australians Studying Abroad.



Reservation Application

TOUR NAME _____
TOUR DATES _____

Please complete **one application, per person in block letters and sign**. Parental signature is required for participants under 18 years of age. Please mail this form with the appropriate deposit to: **P.O. Box 8285, ARMADALE, VICTORIA, 3143**. On receipt of this Reservation Application and deposit, ASA will process your booking and if approved, send you a tour confirmation.

Applicant Details (as in passport)

TITLE Mr ☐ Mrs ☐ Ms ☐ Miss ☐ Dr ☐ Other _____
FIRST NAME _____ Preferred FIRST NAME _____
MIDDLE NAME _____ SURNAME _____
POSTAL ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ COUNTRY _____ POSTCODE _____
TEL. (AH) () _____ TEL. (BH) () _____ Mobile Tel: _____
EMAIL address _____
Date of birth / / GENDER Male ☐ Female ☐

Passport Number _____ Expiry date / / Nationality _____
☐ Colour copy of my current valid passport enclosed ☐ I'm renewing my passport ☐ ASA has a colour copy of my current passport

Covid Certificate ☐ A copy of my current international certificate enclosed

Travel Plans

☐ I plan to leave Australia before the tour commences. Planned departure date / /
☐ I will be arranging my airfare independently and taking the Land Content Only option.

Tour Accommodation (rooming preferences)

I/we would like: ☐ a twin-bedded room ☐ a double-bedded room ☐ a room for sole occupancy
I am travelling: ☐ on my own ☐ with a friend/family member Travel Companion _____

Meals

☐ I do not have any specific dietary requests

Please **X** the box if you **CAN NOT** eat any of the following:

☐ fish ☐ poultry ☐ red meat ☐ dairy products
☐ eggs ☐ pork ☐ nuts
☐ Other _____

Allergies: Refer to the Medical Information

Correspondence

Your preferred method of correspondence ☐ Postal Mail ☐ Email Address _____

Emergency Contact Details

Note: this person **MUST** be available by telephone and be present in Australia for the duration of your tour with ASA

Name _____ Relationship to Traveller _____
Address _____
TEL. (AH) () _____ TEL. (BH) () _____ Mobile Tel: _____
EMAIL address _____

The purpose of seeking this information is to assist ASA to determine, where necessary, whether ASA is able to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate your specific needs and whether your health and safety (or that of your fellow travellers) is likely to be compromised given your choice of tour. It will also assist you and ASA if you fall ill or have an accident whilst travelling.

- ASA reserves the right to decline your Reservation Application if this Medical Information section is not completed properly and may reject or cancel your reservation, or terminate your participation on any tour, if ASA subsequently learns that you have failed to make full and proper disclosure.
- ASA is committed to protecting the privacy of your personal information. ASA's privacy policy is available for viewing at www.asatours.com.au
- If ASA has any concerns about the information you have provided, it will contact you to request clarification before considering your Application.
- ASA requires you to consider carefully your limitations in light of ASA's Physical Endurance Star Rating System in ASA's Brochure and Itinerary when choosing your tour.
- If you are not likely to satisfy ASA's Participation Criteria (see below), ASA, in its sole discretion, may reject your Reservation Application.
- It is a condition of your tour that you agree to accept the directions of ASA's Tour Leaders in relation to your suitability to participate in activities planned on tour.
- ASA reserves the right to cancel your participation on a tour if your behaviour is in ASA's opinion causing undue distress or damage to any person or their property.
- If your participation is discontinued during a tour, ASA will assist by arranging your onward travel (if required) at your own cost, but you will not be refunded for forfeited parts of the tour.
- ASA tour groups are not accompanied by a medical practitioner. ASA recommends that you see your doctor for advice about your specific needs while overseas. You may also wish to contact a travel and vaccination clinic for advice. www.traveldoctor.com.au tel: 1300 658 444; www.travelvax.com.au tel: 1300 360 164.
- Travel insurers require you to declare all existing medical conditions.
- Please carry a complete list of medications with you during the ASA tour. Include **generic names** of each medication (consult your local pharmacy for information).

Please mark **X** in the YES or NO box to every question below and provide details where necessary:

Participation Criteria

To participate in an ASA tour, you must be reasonably fit, in good health and able to participate in all activities without assistance from Tour Leaders or other tour members. **You must also be fully vaccinated against Covid-19.** If you require assistance, a fit and able travel companion must undertake to accompany and assist you with all tasks for the duration of the whole tour. The responsibility of the Tour Leader is to ensure that the larger group enjoys a relaxing and informative journey, and he or she cannot be relied upon to provide ongoing individual assistance to any one guest.

- | | YES | NO |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Can you walk and stand unassisted for at least 2-3 hours a day in hot, humid conditions? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. Can you walk unassisted on and over uneven surfaces? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. Can you climb at least 3 flights of stairs and/or walk up and down steep slopes unassisted? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. Can you walk at a steady pace and no less than 1km every 15 - 20 minutes unassisted? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. Can you organise, manage and carry your own luggage? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. Can you follow and remember tour instructions and meet punctually at designated times and places? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. Can you administer your own medication? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. You do NOT have impaired vision or hearing which may impact your capacity to participate on this tour? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Mobility and Fitness

As many of ASA's international sites do not provide access to wheelchairs or similar mobility aids, we regret that ASA tours are not suitable for people who require the use of a walking frame, wheeled walker, wheelchair or motorised scooter.

1. Do you suffer from any medical conditions that may compromise your mobility and/or fitness to participate on this program? YES NO ☐ ☐
- If yes, please specify

If yes, how will you manage this on tour?

Allergies and/or Food Intolerances

ASA will make reasonable endeavours to organise meals to suit you, provided that you give ASA adequate notice of your specific dietary requirements or allergies. You may be required to research dietary alternatives, as not all destinations may be able to offer suitable food substitutes.

1. Do you have any food allergies or intolerances? YES NO ☐ ☐
- If yes, please specify

2. Have you ever had an anaphylactic reaction to anything? ☐ ☐
- If yes, please specify

Do you carry an epipen? ☐ ☐

3. Do you have any other allergies or reactions to anything, including medical drugs? ☐ ☐
- If yes, please specify

Existing Medical Conditions

You alone are responsible for managing any existing medical conditions, your medication and any medical equipment that you may need when on your tour. Please plan for contingencies and take extra medication, dietary supplements and/or fully charged batteries for medical equipment if your health and safety depends on these. You should take into consideration that power sources at some destinations may be unavailable, inadequate, inconvenient or unreliable.

1. Have you any significant medical conditions that may impact your capacity to complete this tour? YES NO ☐ ☐
- If yes, please specify

If yes, how will you manage this on tour?

2. Do you require some form of powered medical aid, such as a CPAP machine? ☐ ☐

These machines may not be operable on certain international flights, modes of transport, in remote or other areas with inadequate or unreliable power sources without a fully charged independent long life battery or batteries.

Diabetics: You may be travelling and sightseeing for many hours at a time. Insulin dependent diabetics must carry extra supplies of insulin (as this medication cannot be obtained in some destinations), regulators, applicators, storage and refrigeration equipment, as well as any necessary supplements. Accommodation may not provide refrigerators in rooms.

3. Are you diabetic? ☐ ☐
- Are you insulin dependent? ☐ ☐
4. Do you suffer from travel sickness? ☐ ☐
- Remember to use an appropriate medication while on tour.

Declaration

I declare that: I have read and understood the ASA Tour Itinerary, Reservation Application and Booking Conditions. I am aware of ASA's terms as relating to refunds, cancellations, responsibility and liability. I understand that ASA relies upon this declaration when considering this Application. I accept the inherent dangers, risks and uncertainties in travel and those beyond ASA's control and understand they may occur before or during any tour. I have made full and complete disclosure and have not knowingly withheld any medical information about myself from ASA. I have completed this Reservation Application honestly and accurately. I warrant that I am able to participate independently in all activities described by ASA in the itinerary without assistance from any person.

I will advise ASA in writing if any aspect of my fitness and or health conditions change materially at any time before my departure date. I understand and accept that the itinerary, accommodation and lecturers scheduled for this tour may change.

I agree and consent that ASA may give my personal information in this Reservation Application to tour service providers and relevant authorities as required by law, but only for the purpose of making bookings with and engaging services associated with the tour. I understand that if I do not consent to the use of my personal information for this purpose, ASA will decline my Reservation Application.

In consideration of ASA's acceptance of my Reservation Application, I irrevocably release and indemnify ASA from all claims that I, or any other party, may have against ASA its employees, invitees, agents and contractors, however arising in respect of any loss, damage, injury, death or expense incurred in the course of booking, preparing for, travelling to, on and from or cancelling any tour.

I release and indemnify ASA with respect to:

1. Every general risk to which I or my personal belongings may be exposed in the course of preparing for, travelling to, on or from any ASA tour;
2. Every special risk, in particular medical risks, to which I may be exposed in the course of preparing for, travelling to, on or from any ASA tour arising from, including, but not limited to:
 - a. intermittent power cycles and/or the temporary or permanent loss of power (beware CPAP or any other medical machine users);
 - b. dietary, food or other allergies (ASA cannot guarantee that traces of items to which you are allergic are not present in food or drink you are served, medication you are administered or other substances with which you may come into contact);
 - c. any event or situation that may compromise the administration of necessary medication or my health, safety and wellbeing generally; and
 - d. any event or happening beyond ASA's control
3. All claims arising as a result of my or ASA's cancellation or termination of any tour, part of a tour or of my continued participation on a tour for any reason (subject to ASA's refund conditions below).

Limitation of Liability

ASA is not a carrier, event or tourist attraction host, accommodation or dining service provider. All bookings made and tickets or coupons issued by ASA for transport, event, accommodation, dining and the like are issued as an agent for various service providers and are subject to the terms and conditions and limitations of liability imposed by each service provider. ASA is not responsible for their products, services, terms and conditions. If a service provider cancels or does not deliver the product or service for which you have contracted, and does not give a refund, your remedy lies with the service provider, not ASA.

ASA will not be liable for any claim (e.g. sickness, injury, death, damage or loss) arising from any change, delay, detention, breakdown, border closures, cancellation, failure, accident, act, omission or negligence of any tour service provider or authority however caused (contingencies). You must take out such travel insurance as is available against such contingencies.

ASA's liability in respect of any tour cancelled or changed will be limited to the partial refund of amounts you have paid, less an administration fee of \$500 and other costs and charges of third party service providers. No compensation will be payable to you by ASA where ASA cancels or changes a tour, or any part of a tour.

ASA reserves the sole discretion to cancel any tour or to modify itineraries in any way it considers appropriate and in the best interests of health, safety and wellbeing of tour participants. Tour costs may be revised, subject to unexpected price increases or exchange rate fluctuations.

Booking Conditions

DEPOSITS

A non-refundable deposit of \$1000.00 AUD per person is required to reserve a place on an ASA tour.

CANCELLATION FEES

If you cancel your booking the following charges apply:

More than 75 days before departure: your initial deposit of \$1000.00 is non-refundable.**

75-31 days prior 50% of total amount due

30-0 days prior 100% of total amount due

**\$500.00 of this amount (ie 50% of your deposit) may be credited to another ASA tour departing within 12 months of the original tour you booked. We regret, in this case early-bird discounts will not apply.

We take the day on which you cancel as being that on which we receive written confirmation of cancellation.

UNUSED PORTIONS OF THE TOUR

We regret that refunds will not be given for any unused portions or services of the tour, such as meals, entry fees, accommodation, flights or transfers.

WILL THE TOUR PRICE OR ITINERARY CHANGE?

If the number of participants on a tour is significantly less than budgeted, or if there is a significant change in exchange rates ASA reserves the right to amend the advertised price. We shall, however, do all in our power to maintain the published price. Occasionally circumstances beyond the control of ASA make it necessary to change airline, hotel or to make amendments to itineraries. We will inform you of any changes in due course.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

ASA requires all participants to obtain comprehensive travel insurance. A copy of your travel insurance certificate and the **reverse charge** emergency contact phone number must be received by ASA no later than 75 days prior to the commencement of the tour.

FINAL PAYMENT

The balance of the tour price will be due 75 days prior to the tour commencement date.

PLEASE READ THE ABOVE CAREFULLY, PRINT AND SIGN BELOW

☐ I accept the conditions on this booking form ☐ I have read the information about the physical requirements of the tour in the detailed itinerary and confirm that I am able to meet these requirements

Applicant's Signature

Print Full Name

Dated

Tour / Course Name _____

Name of Traveller 1 _____

Name of Traveller 2 _____

I have enclosed a payment to the value of \$ _____ (including CC or bank fee if applicable) for this tour

The above amount is payable for:

- ☐ Intention to Travel ☐ Tour Deposit
- ☐ Balance of Payment ☐ Upgrade from Intention to Travel to a Deposit
- ☐ Travel Insurance ☐ Other (eg. Airfares, Accommodation) _____

International Payments

Welcome to our international travellers! If you are making a payment and do not have an Australian bank account/credit card, we can only accept payment as follows:

- via credit card with the applicable fee - the credit card company/bank will set the exchange rate
- via bank transfer; please give your surname and tour code (eg. Smith 21705) as a reference and ask your bank to allow for all charges.

Bank cheques or personal cheques will not be accepted.

By Cheque (accept Australian cheques only)

Please make cheques payable to *Australians Studying Abroad*

Direct Deposit or Internet Banking

You will need to:

1. Provide your bank with ASA's bank details (see below) and the amount you wish to transfer OR make a direct deposit through any ANZ branch
2. Include any fees levied by the banks
3. Provide a reference number (Mobile or last name recommended).
4. Complete section below, including confirmation no. (given when transaction completed).

Australians Studying Abroad bank details

Bank ANZ
Branch 420 St Kilda Road, Melbourne Vic
Swift Code ANZBAU3M
BSB 013-423
Account No 3472-32759

Bank confirmation No. _____

Reference used: Mobile or last name recommended _____

Date Money Transferred _____

Credit Card Payment

Credit card fees apply: Mastercard, Visa & American Express 2%

Please debit my: ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ American Express

I authorise ASA to debit my credit card for the amount due plus the applicable fee as above

Credit Card Number _____

Expiry Date _____ Security Code (CVC) _____

Bank the Card is linked to (eg. NAB or ANZ) _____

Cardholders Name _____

Cardholders Billing Address _____

Postcode _____

State _____ Country _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Cardholders Signature _____