

As a geography that has nurtured many deep-rooted civilisations, the Anatolian lands have also sustained numerous “firsts”. Where East and West meet, this ancient land is full of surprises, with each step revealing layers of history.

Travelling the country’s western coast, stretching from the Aegean to the Mediterranean, you can encounter the world’s most beautiful ancient treasures, bringing myths to life. Some of these archaeological sites are now open for visitors until midnight to allow more people to discover Türkiye’s rich heritage as part of the night museum project. Dotted with Türkiye’s must-see ancient cities, this region along the crystal blue waters of the Aegean and Mediterranean also invites guests to savour the area’s unique culinary traditions, staples of the Mediterranean Diet.

### At the Heart of the Legend: Troy



There are fascinating ancient cities all around Türkiye, but certainly one of the most renowned is **Troy**, a *UNESCO World Cultural Heritage* site. Set on the foothills of the Ida Mountains in Çanakkale, Troy – with nine different city layers – has been home to multiple settlements and civilisations. As the setting for the Trojan War in Homer’s ancient epic, *The Iliad*, Troy is the first stop on the Aeneas Route, the only Council of Europe-registered cultural route that starts in Türkiye.



**Must-see:** The **Troy Museum**, at the entrance to the ancient city and the winner of Europe’s Most Prestigious Museology Awards. The Troy Museum depicts the history and culture of Troy through clear and comprehensive exhibits of artefacts and other finds excavated in the region.

### The Magnificent Harbour City: Ephesus



Another celebrated ancient city in Türkiye in the Aegean region is **Ephesus**, designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2015. Continuously inhabited for approximately nine thousand years, from the prehistoric to the Ottoman periods, Ephesus was one of the world’s largest port cities in its heyday and is currently among the world’s best-preserved archaeological sites. Structures in the Ancient City include the **Library of Celsus**, and the **great theatre**, the largest in Türkiye with a capacity of 30,000 spectators; the ruins of

the **Temple of Artemis**, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World; the **Mazaeus and Mithridates Gate; Hadrian's Temple**; and the **terrace houses**. You can also visit the Ephesus Experience Museum, the site's newest attraction, for an interactive experience of the landmarks and daily life of Ephesus.



#### **Must-visit:**

In and surrounding Ephesus, which is also one of the seven churches in the Roman province of Asia Minor, as mentioned in the Book of Revelation, are unique artefacts from the Early Christian Period. **The House of the Virgin Mary, the Basilica of St. John, and the Cave of the Seven Sleepers** are among the most important holy sites in the area.

### **An Ageless Healing Centre: Hierapolis**



Adjacent to the Pamukkale travertines in Denizli is **Hierapolis**, an important healing and health centre in antiquity. Two thousand years ago, the travertines had attracted attention in the Kingdom of Pergamum and the Pergamenes began building in the area. The ancient city was called Hierapolis, in honour of Hiera, the wife of Telephos, the legendary founder of Pergamum. The most remarkable structures in Hierapolis include the **Roman Bath** and the **ancient theatre**. Additionally, the city's **Ancient Pool**, featuring columns and marbles, is often open to visitors, who can immerse themselves in the same warm (36 degree) waters allegedly enjoyed by Cleopatra, the Queen of Egypt.



**Must-do:** Enjoy the healing waters and the breathtaking view of **Pamukkale travertines**, offering visitors relaxing and soothing waters in its therapeutic ponds. This white paradise will make you feel like you're in a fairy tale, and the hot springs will leave a lasting effect!

### **An Ancient Treasure with Splendid Acoustics: Aspendos**



One of the best-preserved ancient theatres in the world is in **Aspendos**, set in the Serik district of Antalya in the Mediterranean region. The most distinctive element of the city's storied theatre - which has inspired numerous legends - are its superb acoustics. These skilfully devised acoustics have stood the test of time and can be experienced today at the **Aspendos Theatre**, which continues to host concerts and shows. The

Aspendos **Aqueducts** are another magnificent structure in the city and one of the best examples of a preserved ancient waterway.



**Must-do:** The 31st International Aspendos Opera and Ballet Festival takes place from 13-30 September and features performances held at the Aspendos Theatre, renowned worldwide for its superb acoustics.