

The Way International Study Tours: Paul's Itineraries – Travel Tips

BEING A RESPECTFUL VISITOR:

A Study Tour: Please remember that this is a Study Tour and not an Outreach Itinerary.

- While Islam is the religion of Turkey and 99% of the population is Muslim, it is important to recognize that the country is officially a secular state and uphold its principles by not discussing religious topics in public, especially in mixed-gender settings. Also note that they have laws criminalizing blasphemy against Islam.
- Greek Orthodox is the prevailing religion in Greece, representing 90% of the total population.

Cultural Differences: Be mindful of cultural differences. Understand that cultural norms vary greatly. Simple gestures or behaviors that are normal in your country might be considered rude elsewhere.

Language: Learn basic local phrases. Even if you don't speak the language fluently, learning a few basic phrases like "hello," "thank you," and "please" can go a long way in showing respect and making connections with locals.

Photography: Always ask for permission before taking photos of people, especially in more private or sacred settings.

Polite and Patient: Show patience and politeness in your interactions. Remember that you are a guest and that cultural differences might lead to misunderstandings.

Respect Natural Environments: Follow local guidelines for waste disposal, and stick to designated paths when exploring.

Rights and Privileges: While visiting Turkey and Greece, we are guests in their countries. The rights and privileges of our home country are not carried with us into our host countries.

PREPARING TO TRAVEL:

Communications:

- ☐ Language: Learn a few basic Turkish and Greek phrases to help with communication.
- ☐ Emergency Contacts: Note the contact information for your country's embassy or consulates in Turkey and Greece.
 - U.S. Consulate General Istanbul: +90 (212) 335-9000
 - U.S. Embassy in Athens: +30 (210) 721-2951

Electronics and Connectivity:

- ☐ Electrical Adapters: Turkey uses type C and F plugs with a 230V supply voltage. Bring an adapter to charge your devices.
- ☐ SIM Card: Consider purchasing a local SIM card or an eSIM plan for better connectivity.

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Financial Preparations:

- ☐ Budget: Plan your budget, including daily expenses (lunches, shopping, etc.), and activities.
- ☐ Credit Cards: Inform your bank of your travel plans to avoid any issues with your credit or debit cards, and consider carrying some cash for smaller purchases.
- ☐ Currency: The official currency is the Turkish Lira, in Greece it is the Euro. Exchange some currency ahead of time or use ATMs upon arrival.

Health and Safety:

- ☐ First Aid: Pack a basic first aid kit.
- ☐ Medications: Bring any medications you need, along with a copy of the prescriptions. Consider bringing a backup prescription from your doctor that you can get filled while traveling if needed.
- ☐ Travel Insurance: Consider purchasing travel insurance that covers medical emergencies, trip cancellations, and other unforeseen circumstances.
- ☐ Vaccinations: Consult your healthcare provider for recommended vaccinations.
- ☐ Walking: Begin a walking plan so you will be comfortable walking during the tour.

Local Laws and Customs:

- ☐ Familiarize yourself with local laws, customs and etiquette to ensure respectful interactions.
 - For Turkey, see: <https://www.uscisguide.com/us-travel-visa/local-laws-and-customs-tips-for-us-citizens-traveling-to-turkey/>
 - For Greece, see: <https://www.uscisguide.com/us-travel-visa/local-laws-and-customs-tips-for-us-citizens-traveling-to-greece/>

Packing Essentials:

- ☐ Clothing: Pack clothing suitable for the varied climates in Turkey and Greece. Include lightweight clothing for summer and layers for cooler months.
- ☐ Cultural Considerations: Some religious sites, such as monasteries and mosques, require modest dress. Pack long sleeves and a scarf (for women) if you plan to visit these sites.
- ☐ Comfortable Shoes: Bring comfortable walking shoes for exploring cities and historical sites.

Safety Precautions:

- ☐ Sign up for U.S. Department of State Smart Traveler Enrollment Program to receive helpful notifications.
 - <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/before-you-go/step.html?sfnsn=mo>
- ☐ Secure Belongings: Use a money belt or secure bag to keep your valuables safe.

Travel Documents:

- ☐ Passport: Ensure your passport is valid for at least six months beyond your travel dates.
- ☐ Photocopies: Make photocopies of your passport, visa, travel insurance, and other important documents. Keep one set with you and leave another set with someone you trust at home.

Useful Apps:

- ☐ Install apps for:
 - Communications (like WhatsApp)
 - Currency conversion
 - Language assistance
 - Navigation (like Google Maps)