

STUDY TOUR – TRAVEL PREPARATIONS

PLEASE NOTE: The following are some considerations for planning and packing for a study tour. The information in the “Packing List” section is a sample list you could use for your packing. These are suggestions only. The amounts listed assume you will be doing some laundry during the trip. In Greece and Turkey, laundry can be done at most hotels on a pay-per-piece basis. No self-service options are available.

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 in Turkey is the Lira, in Greece it is the Euro. Exchange some currency ahead of time or use ATMs upon arrival.

INSURANCE:

- ☐ Acquire travel insurance.
- ☐ Check with your medical insurance carrier to confirm if you will be covered while traveling.
- ☐ Check with your dental insurance carrier to confirm if you will be covered while traveling.

PASSPORT AND VISA (if needed) INFORMATION:

Both Turkey and Greece:

- ☐ U.S. citizens need a valid passport with at least six months validity beyond their intended stay.
- ☐ Make two photocopies of your passport, visa (if needed), travel insurance, and other important documents. Leave one copy at home and carry the other separately from your original.

PRE-FLIGHT:

- ☐ Leave your travel information with a family member or friend, including a copy of your passport, your flight itinerary, travel itinerary, hotel names, and phone numbers. In the event of an emergency, family members may contact Pilgrim Tours at 800-322-0788.
- ☐ Check-in time for international flights is normally three hours prior to departure. Bring your passport for all international flights.
- ☐ Dress comfortably for the flight—clothes that allow freedom of movement, slip on shoes, etc.
- ☐ Consider beginning a walking plan so you will be comfortable walking during the tour.

CURRENCY:

- ☐ Visa credit cards can be used at major hotels, restaurants, and tourist shops.
- ☐ Converting dollars to the Turkish Lira and the Euro will make transactions easier.
- ☐ Call your bank before you leave:
 - Let them know you will be out of the country and using your ATM card or credit card.
 - See if they will waive the service fees for these transactions.
 - Check for other restrictions or policies.
- ATM machines in Greece dispense money in EURO ONLY and in Turkey they dispense TURKEY LIRA.
- Due to Turkey being labeled internationally as a high fraud country, ATM withdrawals may be limited to \$75.00 per day.

MEDICATION:

- ☐ Ask your doctor to write an extra prescription to take with you in case your medication is lost.
- ☐ Keep in original bottle with the prescription attached. If necessary, ask your pharmacist for small bottles with labels and take only what you need with a few days extra.

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- ☐ Bring a list of the medications with the generic equivalent, as doctors in other countries may not be familiar with brand names.
- ☐ Keep medications in carry-on bags.
- ☐ Have a note from a prescribing physician for injectable medications and multiple medications.
- ☐ Check with the embassy. This is the most reliable way to confirm if your prescription is legal in Turkey or Greece.

CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS:

A Study Tour: Please remember that this is a Study Tour and not an outreach itinerary.

Culture:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Shopping: Don't be afraid to haggle over prices—it's expected.

When in Turkey:

- 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. Respect its principles by not discussing religious topics in public, especially in mixed-gender settings. Also note that they have laws criminalizing blasphemy against Islam.
- Use polite language and address people with appropriate titles, such as "Bey" for men and "Hanım" for women.
- Personal space: Turks are generally warm and welcoming, but respect personal space, especially in more formal settings.
- Punctuality: Being on time is appreciated, but a slight delay is usually acceptable in social situations.
- Modesty: Wear modest clothes in conservative areas.
- Greetings: Shake hands with each person upon arriving at an office.
- Small talk: Turks engage in small talk before they begin business discussions.
- Physical contact: Turks are generally quite open, tactile people. It is common for friends of the same gender to kiss during greetings, or hug one another.

When in Greece:

- Greek Orthodox is the prevailing religion in Greece, representing 90% of the total population.
- Shaking hands: Shake hands with everyone at a business or social meeting, and again when leaving.
- Kisses: Accept a greeting with two kisses on the cheek.
- Nodding: Nodding your head "yes" is not polite; say "yes" instead.
- Serving: The eldest person is usually served first.
- Eating: Don't start eating until the host says it is time.
- Elders: Elders are highly respected, and children care for their elderly parents.
- Philo-timo means "love of honor." It is a core value that encompasses dignity, pride, honor, hospitality, and trust.

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- Dress is more informal than in most European countries.
- Punctuality is not particularly important, but foreigners are expected to be on time for business meetings.

While Touring:

- **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.

OTHER ITEMS TO NOTE:

Climate:

- Prior to departure check the 10-day forecast on www.weather.com.

Greece:

- **Tour 1 (October):** Most of Greece has warm and sunny weather in October with low rainfall except in northern Greece, the eastern coastal islands, and places with high mountains. The moderate humidity makes it feel warmer. For more details check: <https://www.globalhighlights.com/greece/weather-in-october>.
- **Tour 2 (April):** April's weather is warm, fresh, beautiful, and mostly sunny at low elevations. Higher elevations will have higher winds, more rain, and occasional storms. For more details check: <https://www.globalhighlights.com/greece/weather-in-april>.
- **Tour 3 (May):** In May, southern Greece and the islands are sunny, green, and warm with little to no rainfall. It is cooler with more rain and stormy weather in northern Greece. For more details check: <https://www.globalhighlights.com/greece/weather-in-may>.
- **Tour 4 (September):** Southern Greece has hot, bright, and sunny weather in September with low rainfall. The moderate humidity makes it feel warmer. The continental weather from Europe makes the northern parts of Greece rainier, cooler, and stormier. For more details check: <https://www.globalhighlights.com/greece/weather-in-september>.

Turkey:

- **Tour 1 (October):** October's warm, but not hot, temperatures make it a great time of year to visit the many ancient sites in Turkey. There is also very little rainfall. For more details check: <https://www.globalhighlights.com/turkey/weather-in-october>.
- **Tour 2 (April):** Turkey's weather in April is mild to warm, but not yet hot, throughout most of the country. Humidity levels remain muggy, with higher levels of humidity seen around the coast (Antalya, for example), as well as in Istanbul, and very little rain. For more details check: <https://www.globalhighlights.com/turkey/weather-in-april>.
- **Tour 3 (May):** The weather in Turkey in May is warm, with higher temperatures along the coastline in Antalya and Izmir. Temperatures are also warm and pleasant in Cappadocia and Istanbul, especially during the day, and not much rainfall. For more details check: <https://www.globalhighlights.com/turkey/weather-in-may>.
- **Tour 4 (September):** September in Turkey marks the end of the hot summer months, with warm weather still prevalent throughout the country and barely any rainfall. For more details check: <https://www.globalhighlights.com/turkey/weather-in-september>.

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Cell phones:

- ☐ Contact your cell phone company to verify service in Turkey/Greece, and to get rates.
- ☐ Download apps, like WhatsApp, for Wi-Fi calling/texting. Other useful apps: currency conversion, language assistance, navigation (like Google Maps).
- ☐ Turn on International calling.
- ☐ Enter the following in your cellphone address book: U.S. Consulate General Istanbul: +90 (212) 335-9000; and U.S. Embassy in Athens: +30 (210) 721-2951

Food/Water:

- ☐ In order to avoid indigestion from eating foods that are unfamiliar to you, consider taking acidophilus or probiotic tablets before, during, and after the trip.
- ☐ As much as possible, drink only commercially produced bottled water, instead of tap water – even to brush teeth. Avoid using ice cubes.
- ☐ If you order juice, ask if it was made with tap water or bottled water.
- ☐ Peel fresh fruit.

Electronics and Connectivity:

- ☐ Electrical Adapters: Turkey and Greece use type C and F plugs with a 230V supply voltage. Bring an adapter to charge your devices.

Laundry:

- ☐ In Greece and Turkey, laundry can be done at most hotels on a pay-per-piece basis. No self-service options are available.

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/>

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>

NOTE Baggage Allowance:

- Each passenger is restricted to ONE suitcase and ONE carry-on bag.
- Suitcase: May not exceed 62 inches (length x width x height) and should not weigh more than 50 lbs.
 - Be sure your luggage is clearly marked on the inside and outside. If you are traveling with a tour group, you must use the Pilgrim Tours luggage tags provided along with your own once you arrive in Turkey.
- Carry-On: May not exceed 22 x 14 x 9 inches, and should not weigh more than 20 lbs.
 - Pilgrim Tours recommends your carry-on bag be a backpack which will be most practical for use while touring.

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| PACKING LIST | Name | Name |
|--|-------------|-------------|
| CLOTHING: Casual and comfortable. Planning your wardrobe around one or two colors can be helpful. | | |
| Tops: | | |
| Shirts/Blouses: 4-6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring a mix of short-sleeved and long-sleeved. Shirts with long sleeves that roll up easily can double as short-sleeved. Look for a wrinkle-camouflaging pattern or fabric. Synthetic-blend fabrics (such as Coolmax or microfiber) usually dry overnight. | | |
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| Bottoms: | | |
| Pants: 2 pairs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One pair of lightweight cotton pants and another super-lightweight pair for hot and muggy destinations. If you prefer jeans, choose the lightest-weight pair you have; you can wear comfortable jeans on your flight to save room in your bag. Some travelers like convertible pants/shorts with zip-off legs. While not particularly stylish, they're especially functional in southern Europe, where you can use them to cover up inside churches while still beating the heat outside. | | |
| Shorts: Please make sure they come to the knee. | | |
| Women: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capris Dress | | |
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| Underwear: | | |
| Socks: 4 pairs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bamboo, cotton/nylon-blend, and merino wool socks dry faster than 100 percent cotton. Double-layer socks can help prevent blisters. | | |
| Underwear: 5 pairs (silk or microfiber dries quickest) | | |
| | | |
| Sleepwear: | | |
| Comfy lightweight athletic gear can be used as pajamas. | | |
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| Swimsuits: | | |
| To use public pools, you'll need a swimsuit (not shorts). | | |
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| Shoes: | | |
| Comfortable walking shoes with good traction are essential (this avoids the risk of slipping on wet cobblestone streets). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mephisto, Ecco, and Rieker look dressier than sneakers, but are still comfortable. Sturdy, low-profile tennis shoes with a good tread are fine, too. Make sure they're well broken in before you leave home. If you bring more than one pair, consider sandals. Flip-flops are handy if you'll be going to the pool. | | |
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| Sweater or Warm Layer: | | |

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| Warm and dark is best for layering and dressing up. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vests and cardigans can be mixed and matched to give you several different looks as well as layers. • Museums can be surprisingly chilly—a good reason to include a sweater in your day pack, even in summer. | | | |
| Cardigans or fleece: 1-2 (Lightweight for layering) | | | |
| Vest: Optional - Great for layering | | | |
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| Jacket: | | | |
| Bring a light and water-resistant windbreaker with a hood, or a hooded jacket of Gore-Tex or other waterproof material (rather than an umbrella) is good if you expect rain. | | | |
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| Accessories: | | | |
| Clothing: Belt, hat Scarf - for ladies to cover the head at any religious location that requires this. | | | |
| Jewelry: Do not make yourself a target by wearing expensive jewelry. | | | |
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| HEALTH AND GROOMING: | | | |
| Toiletries: | Protection: | | |
| Body wash | Ear plugs | | |
| Brush/comb | Eye-glasses (extra pair)/Sunglasses | | |
| Deodorant | First aid kit (basic) | | |
| Hand lotion (spf) | Insect repellent | | |
| Hand sanitizer | Sun Protection - long sleeve shirts and pants, sunscreen | | |
| Nail clippers/File/Tweezers | Sunglasses – polarized | | |
| Razor | Medicine: | | |
| Shampoo/Conditioner | OTC: Imodium, Tums/Pepto, Antihistamine, Motrin, etc. | | |
| Toothbrush/Toothpaste/Floss/Gum-picks | Prescriptions in original containers | | |
| Packet of toilet tissues (in your daypack) | Vitamins, supplements, probiotics | | |
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| Electronics: | | | |
| Travel converter: 220/110 volt with C and F plugs. | | | |
| Tablet/Laptop | | | |
| Power pack | | | |

NOTES:

- **Carry with you:** Be sure anything you'll need at the airport or absolutely cannot lose is either on your body or in your carry-on:
 - Travel documents – passport, driver's license, (not military ID). Any necessary health or travel insurance contact info. Printed copy of flight info.
 - Money – debit card, a credit card, and an emergency stash of US cash. Using a money belt (worn around the waist and under clothes) is an easy way to keep these items secure.
 - Medications

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- Keys
- **Electronics:**
 - Headphones/earbuds
 - Download apps, eBooks, and music before you leave home.
 - Consider insuring particularly high-ticket items.
 - Bring chargers for your devices.
- **Laundry supplies:** Bring a bag for dirty laundry (such as a mesh bag or plastic baggies).
 - Hotel shampoo may work fine when doing wash in the sink.
 - For a spot remover, bring a few Shout wipes.
- **Office supplies:**
 - Notepad and pen - A small notepad is a great reminder, and communication aid.
 - Journal - This is where you can capture what you learned and be able to share it with others.
- **Resealable plastic baggies:**
 - These are ideal for containing wet clothes.
 - The two-gallon jumbo size can be used to pack (and compress) clothing or carry laundry.
 - Bring a variety of sizes, and extras for the flight home.
- **Small day pack or backpack:** A lightweight pack is great for carrying a sweater, journal, water, treats and souvenirs while you leave your large bag (with most of your belongings) at the hotel or on the bus.
 - Don't use a fanny pack — they're magnets for pickpockets.
 - Consider bringing a travel-sized First Aid Kit, tissues, toiletries, notebook and pen.
- **Toiletries:**
 - Bring essential toiletries in your carry-on (including any prescription meds).
 - Ask yourself what toiletries you can live without or simply buy in country for a longer stay.
 - Toiletries kits that can hang on a hook or a towel bar help when the hotel bathroom has meager countertop space.
 - Seal all squeeze-bottles in plastic baggies, because in-flight pressure changes can cause leaks.
- **Optional items:** (When in doubt, leave it out: You can buy most of these in country if you need them):
 - Disinfecting wipes - These are handy for sanitizing surfaces as you travel, such as the seatback tray table on an airplane.
 - Water bottle - The plastic half-liter mineral water bottles sold throughout Europe are reusable and work great.
 - Inflatable pillow/neck rest - These are great for snoozing on planes and buses.
 - TSA-approved small locks or zip ties - Use to lock your backpack zippers shut.