

MYSTIC MESOPOTAMIA

TÜRKİYE, 7 DAYS

East of Turkey is a captivating region where towering mountains meet ancient Mesopotamian plains. It's home to a rich mix of cultures – Turks, Kurds, Armenians, Assyrians, and Arabs – reflected in its languages, architecture, and cuisine. The area is generally safe for travelers, with warm hospitality and deep respect for guests being part of the local tradition.

Dress code: There is no requirement for women to cover their heads (except inside mosques or monasteries). Modest clothing is advised in rural areas; in cities, casual attire is acceptable, but very short shorts or revealing tops may draw attention.

Currency: Turkish Lira (TRY). Cash is useful, especially in smaller towns and markets. Credit and debit cards are widely accepted in major cities and tourist areas.

SIM cards: Available at airports and in most cities (Turkcell, Vodafone, Türk Telekom). eSIM options are also available.

Time Zone: GMT+3

Visa: Many nationalities — including those from the EU, US, Canada, and the UK — can enter visa-free for short stays.

Best Time to Visit: Spring and fall offer mild weather and blooming nature.

Day 1 **The Northern Gateway of Mesopotamia**

Your journey begins in **Diyarbakır**, a city wrapped in black basalt walls that whisper the stories of empires long gone. Step inside the **Sur İç Kale** (Inner Castle), where every stone carries the memory of countless rulers. At the **Great Mosque of Diyarbakır** (Ulu Cami), admire one of Anatolia's earliest mosques, its grandeur blending Islamic devotion with Roman remnants.

Pause at the **Hasan Paşa Caravanserai**, once a resting place for Silk Road merchants, now alive with the aroma of Turkish coffee and laughter. Later, stand before the **Ten-Arched Bridge** (Ongözlü Köprü) spanning the mighty Tigris River, a symbol of resilience since the 11th century. Before sunset, stroll through the lush **Hevsel Gardens**, a UNESCO World Heritage site that has fed civilizations for millennia.

Overnight in Diyarbakır

Day 2 **Between Tigris and Tradition**

Travel along the Tigris to **Hasankeyf**, a timeless town carved into cliffs. Wander through ancient cave dwellings, climb to **Hasankeyf Castle**, and visit the turquoise-tiled **Zeynel Bey Mausoleum**, a testament to forgotten dynasties.

Continue to **Midyat**, where honey-colored stone houses glow in the sun. Walk through the old bazaar, discover centuries-old churches, and watch master craftsmen at work in silver workshops. **Optionally**, step into the serene world of the **Mor Gabriel Monastery**, the oldest surviving Syriac Orthodox monastery, echoing with ancient chants.

Overnight in Midyat

Day 3 **City of Stone & Faiths**

Perched on a hill overlooking the endless Mesopotamian plains, **Mardin** is a city of golden limestone and harmony between faiths. Wander the labyrinthine alleys of the **Old Town**, where houses and mosques cling to the slopes like an open-air museum.

Visit the elegant **Zinciriye Medrese**, its courtyards opening onto sweeping horizons. Step inside the **Ulu Cami**, where centuries of prayer have softened the stone floors. At the **Deyrulzafaran Monastery**, once the seat of the Syriac Patriarchate, experience a living bridge between past and present. End the day gazing across the panorama of Mesopotamia, where land and sky merge into eternity.

Overnight in Mardin

Day 4 **Slow Living in the Stone City**

Today is yours to embrace **Mardin** at your own pace.

Sip *dibek coffee* in a rooftop café overlooking the plains. Lose yourself in the narrow bazaars filled with copper, spices, and handwoven textiles. Visit smaller hidden gems like the **Kasimiye Medrese** or the artisan workshops of **Savurkapi**. Or simply wander—every alley reveals carved doorways, ornate balconies, and the hum of daily life continuing in this timeless setting.

Optional activities: cooking classes, wine tasting in nearby vineyards, or a day trip to **Savur**, a quiet town of Ottoman charm.

Overnight in Mardin

Day 5 **Şanlıurfa: Sacred City of Prophets**

Journey to **Göbekli Tepe**, the world's oldest sanctuary (9600 BC), where carved pillars tell the stories of humanity's first beliefs. Continue to **Şanlıurfa**, a city steeped in legend, believed to be the birthplace of the *Prophet Abraham*.

Wander around the sacred pools of **Balıklığöl**, where shimmering carp are said to be holy. Visit the elegant **Halil-ur Rahman Mosque**, then lose yourself in the vibrant maze of the **Urfa Bazaar**, alive with colors, scents, and echoes of ancient trade.

Overnight in Urfa

Day 6 **Thrones of the Gods**

Ascend the mystical **Mount Nemrut**, where colossal stone heads of Antiochus I and gods greet the rising or setting sun. The silence of the mountain amplifies the majesty of this UNESCO World Heritage site.

Explore **Arsameia**, the summer capital of the Commagene Kingdom, cross the ancient **Cendere Bridge**, and stop at the **Karakuş Tumulus**, a royal tomb guarded by stone eagles.

Overnight in Adıyaman

Day 7 **City of Flavors & Ancient Art**

Your journey concludes in **Gaziantep**, where history and gastronomy meet. Visit the **Zeugma Mosaic Museum**, home to dazzling Roman mosaics like the famous Gypsy Girl. Stand atop **Gaziantep Castle**, a fortress that has watched over the city for centuries.

In the **Bakırcılar Çarşısı** (Copper Bazaar), hear the music of hammer and metal as artisans craft their wares. Finally, indulge in a feast of Antep cuisine—succulent kebabs, buttery baklava, and the crisp, pistachio-filled katmer. A fitting farewell to Mesopotamia.

According to your flight, overnight in Gaziantep or Departure