

# TURKEY ATTRACTS VISITORS WITH RELIGIOUS TRAVEL HOT SPOTS



Turkey is developing fast not only as a cultural and historical tours destination but the country increasingly attracts religious tourists as well. Among the top attractions are Ephesus and Hagia Sophia Church.

Religious tourism or pilgrim tourism in Turkey is growing in popularity. These tours are perfect for people who want to trace back the history of their religion, visit Biblical places and hear the legends related to the apostles. Many luxurious or even [cheap holidays in Turkey](#) include the following hot spots of religious tourism.

## **Hagia Sophia Church, Istanbul**

Located in Istanbul, it is a legacy made for both Christian and Muslim culture. It was originally a church converted into a mosque by Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror. Here, you will see one of the most beautiful architectural designs. The magnificent dome will take your breath away as it is almost 56 meters high and 31 meters in diameter. It was included in UNESCO's List of World Heritage.

## **Ephesus, Izmir**

Located near the Aegean Sea, it is one of the greatest cities of the Greeks in Asia Minor. It is a sacred site for Christians due to its strong association with biblical figures such as Apostle Paul, John the Baptist and Mary. It is also a tourist attraction for travelers on Mediterranean cruises. It used to be home of the Temple of Artemis which is included in the Seven Wonders of the World.

## **Church of St. Peter, Antakya**

Antakya or Antioch is the place where Peter lived. This small cave church is regarded as the world's first church where saints named the new religion Christianity. It is believed to be carved by Peter himself. The church also includes pieces of floor mosaics and frescoes.

## **Chora Church, Kariye Müzesi**

Just like Hagia Sophia, Chora Church was also a church that was converted into a mosque. It is one of the most beautiful examples of a Byzantine church. Inside the building is a beautiful interior covered with fine mosaics and frescoes. These paintings are of religious figures such as Mary, Joseph and Moses.

## **Pool of Sacred Fish, Şanlıurfa**

Known as the place where King Nimrod attempted to murder Abraham by throwing him into a furnace. It was believed that with God's will, fire turned into water and wood turned to carps. Here, you can enjoy the scenic beauty and appreciate the infrastructures that surround it.

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