

SOUTHERN SEA VENTURES

TURKISH ODYSSEY

THIRTEEN DAY TRIP WITH SEVEN DAYS KAYAK EXPEDITION AND FIVE DAYS GULET CRUISE WITH DAY PADDLES

Turkey is a country where east meets west. Northwest Turkey (north of the Bosphorus at Istanbul) is geographically part of Europe, while the major area of Turkey is part of Asia. Turkey has over 7000 kilometres of coastline – along the Black Sea and the Mediterranean.

Our trip along a section of the Mediterranean coast offers a smorgasbord of historical and cultural experiences. Designed for people with some paddling experience, our first 7 days is a 120-kilometre self-contained kayak trip from Köycegiz to Göcek. Camping on remote beaches, paddling beneath Lycian tombs carved into sheer rock faces, hiking up rugged hillsides for expansive views over the sparkling turquoise Mediterranean, keeping eyes peeled for giant turtles, visiting hot springs and exploring ancient ruins, we experience a wild and natural area of Turkey.

At Göcek, we farewell our kayaks and board a comfortable 6-cabin gulet (traditional handcrafted motor yacht) for a cruise to Kemer, with optional paddling using inflatable kayaks and wonderful side hikes. We take in ancient cities, royal tombs and historic sites like Gemiler, Simena, Olimpos and Phaselis. At the delightful harbour town of Kas we explore narrow alleyways, carpet emporiums and cafes. Of course, there's also time for swimming and relaxing. Our exact itinerary will vary depending on weather conditions and opportunities along the way.

A QUICK ITINERARY

Day 1	Pick up at Dalaman airport, transfer to Köycegiz, B&B accommodation.	
Days 2-7	Self contained sea kayaking trip through Köycegiz Lake, the Dalyan Delta and Mediterranean Turquoise Coast to Göcek Bay.	BLD
Day 8	Finish kayaking in Göcek, and board gulet in the afternoon.	BLD
Days 9-12	Cruise the Mediterranean coast, past Ölüdeniz, Gemiler Island, Kalkan, Kas, Myra, Finike and Olimpos.	BLD
Day 13	Cruise to Kemer, disembark immediately after breakfast and transfer to Antalya town or the airport. Trip concludes.	B

MEETING PLACE AND TIME

As people arrive directly from overseas and also from various points within Turkey we have several meeting options on Day 1 of the trip. **Please make sure we know of your preferred arrangement.**

1. Dalaman airport - we meet at 8.30am, this will coincide with the 7:05 am flight out of Istanbul.
2. Köycegiz bus station - please advise your arrival details to arrange pick up.
3. Make your own way to the Alilia Hotel in Köycegiz. The hotel check in is not until the afternoon but the hotel can look after your bags until your room is ready.

HOW TO GET THERE

The closest airport to Köycegiz is Dalaman airport. There is an airport at Antalya, where the trip finishes. Turkish Airlines has daily flights from Istanbul to and from both these cities and it's advisable to book early as the routes are busy during summer. It's worth asking your travel agent about free internal legs in conjunction with international flights on Turkish Airlines.

There are several bus companies in Turkey with extensive networks around the country.

Two of the major bus companies, which have English websites, are Varan (www.varan.com.tr) and Ulusoy (www.ulusoy.com.tr).



PADDLING EXPERIENCE

This trip is designed for people with some previous paddling experience. You do not have to be an expert or know how to roll. However, you should have practiced a wet exit and assisted re-entry before the trip. This can easily be practiced in waist deep warm water at home, with a friend's help or under tuition. We are always happy to discuss your experience, and can often suggest how beginning paddlers might gain the necessary experience at home to prepare for the trip. We require all participants to complete and return our "Experience Form" shortly after booking. It is important to recognize that the weather will influence greatly what we can and can't do.

We predominantly use single kayaks on this trip, but one or two doubles may be available. The degree of difficulty of the trip will depend on the weather we encounter. The wind normally picks up along the coast in the afternoon and causes small waves. We paddle for up to 5 to 6 hours per day. It is important to realise that the group will kayak at the speed of the slowest members. All participants should feel confident in swimming.

The kayaks we use for the camping segment are stable, easy to paddle and control. They are designed as expedition boats, and it is important to keep gear to a minimum, because we carry on board all our food and equipment. Our guides are highly experienced sea kayakers and professional guides. On Day 2 you will be given a thorough briefing on sea kayaking techniques with ample time to practice and familiarise yourself with your kayak. Our first two paddling days are on a large lake and river system, before we head out into the more exposed Mediterranean.

On the gulet segment of the trip we will carry a few inflatable kayaks but will be walking and exploring historical sites every day.

As with most activities, the fitter you are, the more you will enjoy the paddling. It's a good idea to take some regular exercise like paddling, walking, jogging, cycling, aerobics or swimming ahead of the trip.

We generally limit our group to a maximum of 10 clients, plus the 2 guides.

PROPOSED ITINERARY

The following itinerary should be seen as an approximate guide only. Our aim is to have a real Turkish adventure and a great time, rather than being governed by a rigid schedule. Our program may change to take advantage of opportunities as they arise, to suit local conditions and according to the preferences of the group. Please note that weather conditions, breakdowns and other factors can cause alterations and delays to our itinerary.

Day 1 – Transfer to our accommodation in Köycegiz. Trip briefing is held at 6.00pm. We will give out dry-bags that you will pack for the kayaking. Extra luggage will be brought to Göcek for our gulet cruise. However, space on the gulet is also limited, and we recommend you bring soft luggage rather than suitcases, as this is easier to store on the gulet. Bed and breakfast accommodation tonight.

Day 2 – After a briefing about how to paddle your kayak, we set off along the shores of the lake, which is a protected nature reserve. We may take a break on a small island with a ruined church, with time for a swim. We finish the day at a small bay where there are hot sulphur springs and thermal baths, and we camp on a small beach or in the forest nearby.

Day 3 – When we enter the channels of the Dalyan delta, we first visit some special undeveloped mud baths! We then kayak past the town of Dalyan and through a labyrinth of reeds, passing beneath impressive Lycian rock tombs built into a sheer cliff face. After a home-cooked Turkish lunch, and the option to visit the ruined city of Caunos, we carry on to Iztuzu beach, keeping eyes peeled for giant sea turtles. Where fresh water meets the sea, this famous 6 km long stretch of sand is also known as 'Turtle Beach', and is the nesting ground of endangered Caretta Caretta turtles.

Day 4 – Today is our first day on the open Mediterranean Sea. We turn east to follow the coastline along the length of Iztuzu beach, playing with the waves and visiting a beautiful cave. We have lunch on a small beach with great snorkelling. After lunch we paddle past high cliffs to our campsite at the small bay of Ası Koy.

Day 5 – This morning we paddle around Disibilmez Cape and on to the sandy beach at Sarigerme. We pass Baba Island, and then continue along the long beach between Sarigerme and Dalaman. Tonight we camp in a small bay and have our food cooked on a real fire.

Day 6 – Rest Day! Time for some snorkelling and a hike up to ruins on the Kapidagi Yarimadasi peninsula. We should have some great views of the surrounding rugged limestone coastline, and will use the time to exercise our legs as the next day is one of our longest paddling days.

Day 7 – Today we tackle Cape Kurtoglu, with its rugged and spectacular coastline. After rounding the last part of the headland, we pass between the mainland and several islands into the sheltered waters of Göcek Bay. After lunch we can walk up the hill on one of the islands for a great view over the bay, and there are some Lycian ruins to be seen. In the afternoon we paddle around the islands exploring caves and ancient baths. Tonight we camp on an island and eat dinner in a small restaurant.

Day 8 – After a wake-up call from mountain goats followed by breakfast, we paddle between small islands in Göcek Bay. In the afternoon we arrive at the port and marina of Göcek, where we board our gulet. We'll have a welcome drink and be given information about the gulet and our program for the next few days. We spend the night in the Göcek harbour or a nearby bay and eat dinner on board.

Day 9 – We cruise past Ölüdeniz. After a long swimming stop, we head to Gemiler Island where we have dinner and spend the night. Gemiler has great views and some wonderful hiking among extensive Byzantine ruins that once housed a sizeable Greek Christian community.

Day 10 – We cruise past Kalkan, a small harbour town, where we may visit a nearby 2nd century Roman aqueduct that carried water for 20 km to the ancient city of Patara. Kalkan is a lovely village with more restaurants than houses. We carry on to Kas, to wander through the small town with its interesting shops, bars, rock tombs and amphitheatre. We continue cruising to the rocky limestone islets near Simena, anchoring underneath a Byzantine fortress.

Day 11 – After a dawn hike to the castle battlements, and then gliding above the sunken city of Kokova, we cruise in the direction of Demre, the site of the ancient city of Myra, eating breakfast on the way. We have the option to travel overland and visit the church of Saint Nicholas (Santa Claus), Lycian rock tombs and the ancient theatre. The gulet continues cruising on to Adrasan and into Honeymoon Bay for dinner and a night at anchor under the shadow of Mt Olimpos.

Day 12 – We explore the ancient city of Olimpos, near to the fascinating Chimera - natural gas that leaks from the rocks and burns day and night. We overnight in a bay near the ruins of Phaselis.

Day 13 – After exploring the airy city of Phaselis, that once traded timber, rose oil and perfumes, or taking a final swim, we cruise to Kemer where we disembark after breakfast. We are transferred to Antalya city or airport where we say our farewells.

CLIMATE

Summers in southwest Turkey are hot and dry, especially in July and August. The months of May, June, September and October are a little cooler – still shorts and T-shirt weather at most times, with the possibility of occasional showers. The weather is generally settled and predictable.

ACCOMMODATION AND CAMPING

Köycegiz: We will have simple twin-share bed and breakfast accommodation.

Camping: We highly recommend taking advantage of the stable Mediterranean weather and sleeping out under the stars. We supply individual ground sheets or two-person tents and communal camping equipment. You can either bring your own sleeping mat or thermarest and sleeping bag, or rent them. Rental charge would be US\$30 for a bag and mat for the trip, or US\$10 for a mat alone. Note that the rental sleeping bags are quite bulky, so if you have a compact, small bag it's a good idea to bring it.

Gulet: Accommodation is in small but comfortable two person cabins, usually with private bathrooms and showers and air conditioning. Facilities are simple, and much of our time aboard is spent relaxing on the teak decks looking out on the water. The gulet is full board but soft drinks and alcohol are extra.

TRIP ORGANISATION

Camping Segment

Our paddling days will start early to make the most of each day. It's a good idea to pack your dry-bag before breakfast, prepare your personal items for the day and roll up your groundsheet or take down your tent so that loading for departure can be organised.

For most of the trip we camp wild on beaches, which means of course that there are no organised facilities. If you opt to sleep without a tent, it is easy to find a perfect sleeping spot overlooking the water. Alternatively the two-person tents with integral nets are easy to erect and take down. On arrival in camp you will be expected to unload your own boats, and you and your partner will be responsible for your own tent or sleeping site. The guides will also appreciate your assistance in other camp duties. We find that people joining our trips alone soon make friends.

Food

Our guides usually prepare meals in camp, but your help is welcomed. At some campsites we are able to eat local Turkish food at a nearby restaurant. For the gulet segment of the trip, all meals are provided on board by the professional crew.

We are happy to cater for vegetarians and other special dietary requirements. Please let us know at the time of booking.

EXPEDITION STAFF

There will be two experienced kayak guides.

Sally Campbell – Trip Leader. Other guide to be determined.

Sally is British and has lived in Turkey for 18 years traveling and working, and is fluent in Turkish. She has also lived and worked in Italy, Israel, Zimbabwe, Japan and New Zealand. She has been leading sea kayaking tours in Turkey since 1998.

Should you have any inquiries during the trip, feel free to ask your guides.

CONSERVATION

It has always been our motto that "we take only photographs and leave only footprints". We are keenly aware of the ecology of the areas we visit and try to limit our impact on them. We ask that each person takes out everything they bring in including candy wrappers, batteries, etc.

PHOTOGRAPHY

We are paddling mainly in a salt water environment and the delicate electronics in digital or film cameras can be damaged. You might consider a waterproof camera or a small plastic waterproof case or dry-bag with a supply of Silicon Packs. Ensure you have sufficient memory storage and batteries for a digital camera as there is no opportunity to purchase batteries or access electricity



during our kayak trip. If you are using a film camera it is wise to keep lenses to a minimum. One variable lens will reduce your load and the amount of your equipment that can be damaged! Low speed films are fine on the water but in the alleyways of a town some higher speed films are useful. We recommend all film be purchased and processed in your home country. If you are buying a new camera, consider a waterproof one and get it well before departure so you can practice with it. It is inconvenient to find fault with the camera during a trip.

MONEY MATTERS

Your tour cost includes:

- Bed and breakfast accommodation in Köycegiz on a twin share basis for the first night of the trip.
- Expedition kayaks, paddles, life jackets and safety equipment.
- Groundsheets or 2-person tents.
- Watertight dry-bags for your personal gear while kayaking.
- Full board accommodation on the gulet for 5 nights.
- Professional guides.
- All meals except the first night in Köycegiz.
- Group airport transfers.

Your tour cost does not include:

- Any flights.
- Sleeping bags and mats for camping (these can be hired at an extra charge).
- Entry fees into historic sites.
- Items of a personal nature such as postage and laundry.
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Airport taxes.
- Travel insurance.
- Tips – it is customary to tip the gulet crew.

You should bring Turkish currency for items such as souvenirs, drinks and snack purchases in towns and villages, and entry fees to historic sites during the trip. As an indication, entry fees are generally the equivalent of around A\$5-\$15 per site.

MONEY TO BRING WITH YOU

There are ATM machines in the main centres, and this is the most efficient way to obtain Turkish lira. Turkish lira is worthless outside Turkey so it is better to exchange small amounts at a time. Credit cards are accepted in larger stores or hotels but don't rely on being able to use one everywhere. Traveller's cheques and cash can be changed at banks in the larger towns and cities but it can take time. US dollars and Euros are far easier to exchange than Australian dollars within Turkey, but if you are traveling to Europe before or after it is better to have Euros.

During the trip you need money for dinner on Day 1 at Koycegiz, bottled water, soft drinks and alcohol on the gulet, entry fees to a few historical sites, and any shopping you intend to do.

TIPPING

We recommend you put aside a little money for general tips, ie restaurants, porters. On the gulet, tipping is customary and we suggest the Turkish equivalent of A\$10 per client per day – this will be distributed among the gulet's crew.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

It is necessary to take out a personal insurance policy to cover yourself against sickness, accident, loss of baggage, trip cancellation and in the unlikely event that you need emergency evacuation by plane or helicopter due to illness or accident. Ensure you have read the policy thoroughly and are familiar with the claim process, in case it becomes necessary to make an emergency claim.

We strongly recommend you take out insurance at the time of booking. Please supply us with the policy details (insurance company name and contact details and policy number) before the trip.

MEDICAL MATTERS

All participants are required to provide us with a medical questionnaire filled out completely and accurately.

Please check with your doctor or medical centre whether you require any vaccinations or boosters. An expedition first aid kit is carried on the trip. We strongly recommend that you bring with you any required medicines and a small First Aid Kit for your own personal use. Due to the remoteness of the trip it is advisable to have a dental checkup before departure.

PASSPORT

Make sure that you have a signed passport and that its validity will extend to 6 months after the date of your return. If you are not an Australian citizen and are returning to Australia after your trip, make certain that you have the necessary re-entry permit from the Department of Immigration.

VISAS

Australian citizens can purchase a tourist visa on arrival at the airport before you clear immigration, for US \$20. If you are a different nationality, please check with the nearest Turkish embassy for current advice. The tourist visa is valid for 3 months and photographs are not required.

WATER

Bottled water is readily available in towns and preferable to tap water that, although chlorinated, is not as safe. Water during the kayaking will be filtered and bottled water is available on the gulet.

BAGGAGE ALLOWANCE

Free airline baggage allowance is generally 20 kg. – Check with your airlines. Any excess baggage charges are your responsibility and will be levied by the airline involved. Please make sure that ALL luggage items are clearly labelled with your name and address before checking them onto your flight. Please do not put any sharp items into your carry on luggage as they will be confiscated at the airport.

EXCESS LUGGAGE

Any excess luggage that you do not take kayaking can be stored and transferred from the Alilia hotel to where we board the gulet in Gocek on Day 8. There is room on the gulet to store your bags but soft collapsible luggage is preferable as the cabins are small.

ALCOHOL

If you wish to bring alcohol onto the gulet there will be time to purchase it in Gocek prior to boarding, or you can buy it duty free on your way to Turkey. Some alcohol will be available to purchase on the gulet.

SECURITY

Before leaving home, photocopy your passport, airline ticket and make a note of your credit card and ATM card numbers in case you lose or misplace them. All passports, airline tickets, valuables, excess cash and travellers cheques can be left securely with your stored luggage during the kayaking. Theft is a consideration in Turkey (like at home) so it is always a good idea not to leave things unattended. Do not carry large amounts of cash with you and always be aware of what you are carrying, especially personal valuables like cameras, jewellery and watches. Do not display valuable items or leave them lying around in such a way that might tempt a thief. It is a good idea to use a money belt or neck wallet.

CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT

Carefully check through all essential items. You can leave excess luggage at the hotel and it will be transferred to us after the kayaking section. The dress code overall in Istanbul and Turkey is modest, but it is more relaxed on the Mediterranean coast. If visiting mosques women are advised to cover their shoulders, have a headscarf and wear a longer skirt, while men should wear long pants.

Essential Items

The following checklist is primarily for the kayak and camping portion of the trip.

- Lightweight waterproof rain jacket (wind protection as it hasn't rained in 4 years)
- 2 T-shirts
- 2 pairs of shorts and swimming gear
- 1 pair of sand shoes or running shoes
- Lightweight socks
- 1 pair of sport sandals (e.g. Teva or similar) or paddling booties
- 1 pair of lightweight, quick drying, full length trousers
- Lightweight long-sleeved shirt is recommended in camp for protection from insects
- Lightweight woollen jumper or fleece jacket
- Sarong for the gulet
- 1 long sleeved thermal or polyester top is recommended while paddling for sun protection or warmth in rainy conditions. Lycra rash vest is also suitable.
- Wide-brimmed hat for protection from the sun is essential. Sun visors are inadequate. A hat with a stiff brim that will hold rigidity in a breeze, and a chin strap to keep on in the wind. A scarf made from a light material such as silk, to protect your neck, is useful for sun protection.
- Small towel (a chamois towel is ideal)
- Minimal personal toiletries (biodegradable salt water soap may be desired)
- Good waterproof sun cream and lip balm
- Insect repellent (recommend RID) as there may be mosquitoes around the lake
- Sunglasses with a cord or string for attaching them to prevent loss
- **Lightweight and compact sleeping bag and inner sheet**
- **Foam mat or thermarest**
- ****Foam mat & sleeping bag can be hired for US \$30 if required. US \$10 for the mat only. Be sure to let us know if you require a mat or sleeping bag. The sleeping bags for hire are not very compact so it is preferable to bring your own.**
- Small torch and batteries
- A small daypack, bum bag or dry bag is good for holding things like sunscreen, glasses, etc. both for paddling and day walks.
- A small drybag is also useful for keeping a camera and valuables handy while paddling.
- A wetsuit vest may be useful if you feel the cold
- 1 or 2, one litre water bottles (the type used by cyclists are good and inexpensive)
- Lightweight cycling gloves can ease blistering if you have not paddled recently.
- Pillow case, this takes up little room and allows for creating a comfortable pillow.

Optional Items

- Power points require a plug with two round pins
- Cards/games
- Book or magazine
- Lightweight clothesline
- Binoculars (the bird watching on Lake Köycegiz is very good)
- Snorkelling gear (mask and snorkel only to save space or just swimming goggles)
- Camera – do bring sufficient film, batteries, and storage cards if you are using a digital camera

END OF THE TRIP

The gulet programme finishes in Kemer after breakfast, around mid-morning. We have a two hour transfer to Antalya town or approximately 3 hours to Antalya airport. Please allow enough time on this day if you are booking onward flights.

OTHER PLACES TO SEE IN TURKEY

It's worth considering extending your time in Turkey as there is a huge range of fascinating places to visit. The following is a brief list of suggestions – it is by no means exhaustive.

- Istanbul – palaces, mosques and bazaars.
- Cappadocia – fantastic erosion formations and houses, churches and entire underground cities carved out of tuff – a soft porous volcanic rock; also hot air ballooning.
- Ephesus – well preserved classical Roman city ruins.
- Pamukkale – gleaming white calcified shelves, pools and waterfalls – “cotton castle”.
- Gallipoli – battlefield memories.
- Taurus Mountains – hiking and trekking.
- Kackar Mountains – hiking and trekking.

DELAYS OR PROBLEMS

In case of last minute delays or problems, contact Southern Sea Ventures in Australia on +61 2 8901 3287.

SOUTHERN SEA VENTURES

HEAD OFFICE – SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

PO Box 641, St Ives, NSW 2075

Ph: (02) 8901 3287 Fx: (02) 8901 3297

International phone or fax inquiries: 61 2 8901 and the last four digits

Email: ssvtrips@southernseaventures.com

Website: www.southernseaventures.com

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