

Seven Churches of Revelation, TURKEY Tour

15 Frequently Asked Questions

1) *If I am not a cyclist, is this a trip for me?*

YES! This is a trip for you. We expect an equal number of cyclists and non-cyclists. Non-cyclists are just as important as cyclists. There will be plenty for both groups to do. Non-cyclists will have more chance to explore on guided tours, and more chance to browse and sightsee. However, both cyclists and non-cyclists will share the same hotels in the evenings, eat dinners and most breakfasts together, take part in joint meetings in the evenings, and can share free days. This is not a “roughing it” trip. All accommodations are four and five-star hotel. Several places are world-class spas. (Websites of likely hotels are listed in the downloadable “Detailed Trip Information” document). You can make this trip as active or as relaxing as you like. We will cater to both groups. The trip is intended for both men and women aged sixteen years of age and up.

2) *What kind of reception should I expect in Turkey?*

Western Turkey is tourist heaven. Tourism is officially encouraged by the Turkish government, and many people make a living from tourism. It is beautiful, loaded with historic places, and still relatively affordable. Streets are safe, and the local police are always interested to safeguard visitors.

3) *How is the trip organized? Who will be the trip leaders?*

The trip is organized jointly by Cycle Mission (www.cyclemission.org), Bible Bike Tours (www.biblebiketours.org), and Spain Cycle Tours (www.spaincycletours.org), ministries affiliated with the Free Methodist Church of Europe. Tour organizers Peter Clark (Cycle Mission), Mike Long (Bible Bike Tours) and Josue Fajardo (Spain Cycle Tours) will share leadership, with Peter handling movement (daily schedules, logistics, overall tour decisions), Mike handling ministry (group meetings, public relations, etc.), and Josue handling money and cultural/historical briefings. Tour leaders have contracted with Dos Plumas Travel (www.gotourturkey.com) to handle hotel and food logistics within Turkey. Jim Reynolds, the head of Dos Plumas Travel may join the tour as a cyclist, and to ensure that all tour arrangements within Turkey go smoothly. You may contact Dos Plumas Travel directly if you are interested in any other details about Turkey and our food / lodging arrangements. Dos Plumas could also advise if you want to make any other travel arrangements either before or after the “Seven Churches of Revelation” tour. Their contact email is: info@gotourturkey.com and phone number in Antalya, Turkey is: +90 533 964 7600.

4) *How do I pay, and what are the penalties if I have to cancel?*

You may pay directly via the Cycle Mission website at http://www.cyclemission.org/?page_id=6. Please note that the total tour cost is 1,095 EUROS if you pay by June 15, 2010, and 1,150 EUROS if you pay by August 20, 2010 which is the last day that we can guarantee space for the tour. (Space after this date is not guaranteed, and any request after August 20, 2010 will only be considered on a case-by-case basis). If you have to cancel, you can get a 100% refund on your payment prior to August 20. Between August 20 and September 20 you can get a 50% refund, and after September 20, your full payment is nonrefundable. We strongly urge all participants to consider acquiring trip cancellation insurance. ATM machines are widely available within Turkey. Bring your debit and/or credit cards to use in the ATM machines. This is the best way to obtain local currency you may need for "extras."

5) *What does my payment cover?*

The payment covers all hotels in double occupancy rooms (you can request a single room for 200 EUROS extra), all breakfasts and dinners, all scheduled internal tour travel once you arrive at the Izmir airport on October 21 until you depart on October 30, all entrance fees to sites, one drink and water at breakfast and dinner, local English-speaking guides, special speakers, planned cultural events, vehicle backup for cyclists, and local travel health and liability insurance.

6) *What does my payment NOT cover?*

The payment does not cover any international or domestic flights (you need to book these on your own), travel insurance, airport departure taxes, visas, optional sightseeing excursions not on the itinerary, excess baggage charges, gratuities, lunches, drinks during the day, cycling uniforms, spare bicycle parts, spare bicycles, or any other personal expense. Tips are encouraged for drivers and guides.

7) *Am I required to seek sponsorship for local needs?*

No. However, the www.cyclemission.org website does have a tab to download a possible sponsorship form should you decide to help raise additional funds prior to the trip for needs to be identified within Turkey. We encourage you to either seek sponsors or make a direct donation during the trip to meet local needs we will present during the trip.

8) *What should I pack for the trip?*

Several weeks prior to the trip, we will be sending all registered participants a recommended packing list. In general, weather in late October in western Turkey is variable. Average high temperature in Izmir, Turkey in October is 23 degrees centigrade (73 degrees Fahrenheit) and the average low is 12 degrees centigrade (54 degrees Fahrenheit). Izmir averages six rainy days in the month of October. Several of our hotels will have indoor and/or heated thermal pools in which to relax in case of bad weather.

9) *Will I learn a lot on this trip?*

YES, YES, YES. Dr. Mark Wilson, our special speaker is a world-renowned expert on the seven churches. He will be joining us for the last several days of the tour. Check out his website at: <http://sevenchurches.org/mark/>. In addition, our licensed English-speaking Turkish guides will be extremely knowledgeable on all the sites and local history and culture, and will be traveling with us at all times. We want to make this as educational, informative, and enriching as possible of an experience . . . the seven churches and the book of Revelation will come alive to you during and after the Tour. We also expect a very diverse and interesting group of participants, with extensive experience in multiple parts of the world. We expect you will make many new friends and contacts.

10) *When and how should I fly in and out?*

You must arrive into Izmir airport by mid-afternoon, Thursday, October 21 at the latest, and depart Izmir no earlier than Saturday morning, October 30. Izmir airport is very nice and convenient, and the official Crowne Plaza Izmir bus will wait to pick you up at the Izmir airport to take you to the hotel at the beginning of the tour and take you back to the airport from the Crowne Plaza Izmir at the end of the tour. The tour officially begins with dinner on Thursday evening, October 21, and concludes with breakfast on Saturday morning, October 30. International flights can be booked directly into and out of Izmir. Alternatively, you may want to see Istanbul either before or after the official tour, and thus could choose to fly internationally into and out of Istanbul. Internal flights between Istanbul and Izmir are frequent and cheap. Dos Plumas Travel (www.gotourturkey.com) may be available to assist with internal Turkey travel arrangements and could recommend additional places to tour within Turkey should you decide to extend your stay in Turkey. You may also contact any of trip organizers should you have any questions about the best way to get into and back out of Turkey.

11) *Will you be providing trip cycling uniforms?*

Yes and no. We will be designing and bulk ordering official trip cycling uniforms. However, the cost of these is not included in the official tour cost. Every participant will have the option of buying a cycling uniform. We will likely try to incorporate colors from the Turkish flag in the uniform design. It will be an excellent keepsake, and will make for great trip photos! We will provide more information on this, including ordering information, as we get closer to the trip date.

12) *What is the cycling route like?*

We have driven every bit of the 625-kilometer cycling route. All roads are paved, but pavement is a bit rough in spots, so cyclists are encouraged to put slightly wider tires on their road bikes (mountain bikes are discouraged) in order to minimize potential for flat tires. We are riding on public roads with moderate to light traffic. Most roads have decent shoulders, though the roads may narrow in some places. The route is largely flat, with one 650 meter (about 2,000 foot) climb one day, and rollers along the coast on the last day. There will be several long cycling days with the longest day (180 kilometers on largely flat road) into Selcuk/Ephesus/Kusadasi, a real endurance test. Backup vehicles will always be close to pick up cyclists as required.

13) *What if I like the idea of cycling, but I am not really sure that I can do the route?*

Don't worry. A backup vehicle will be nearby to drive you part of the way if necessary. This is not a race. You can feel free to take cycling days off and join the non-cyclists when you want. Normally, we will divide into at least two groups of cyclists each day – a faster group that likes to ride with pace, and a slower group that wishes to ride at a more leisurely speed. One backup vehicle will serve the faster group, and another backup vehicle will serve the slower group. You should be able to do the trip with some moderate training in order to complete the trip at a leisurely pace. The terrain is not especially difficult – some of the days will just be a little bit long on the bike. Our goal is to ensure you have a pleasant overall experience as you ride. What usually happens, is that soon enough into the trip you discover a group of cyclists who like to ride at relatively the same speed as you do. One of the joys of these trips is the bonding experience that comes from riding with others on the bicycle – sharing laughs, sharing stories, sharing adventure.

14) *What sort of bike should I bring? What about spare parts?*

Bring a road bike, with at least 10 gears. A mountain bike will definitely slow you down, and is not optimal for this route. Bring your own spare parts – tubes, tires, spokes, etc. As mentioned earlier, we recommend slightly wider tires than normal given uneven asphalt in spots. We will have people with mechanical ability on the trip, and sets of bike tools and pumps, but you will

largely be responsible for caring for your own bike. Bike stores are present in the larger cities, but quality of bike repair varies. Backup vehicles come with racks to transport bikes. Your cycling bag, box, luggage, etc. will be stored at the Crowne Plaza Izmir, and available when you need to repack your bicycle at the end of the tour.

15) *What if I don't own a road bicycle or will have difficulty bringing my own bicycle?*

We will be bringing a limited number of additional road bikes, which will be available for rent at a reasonable rate. Please advise us when you register and pay if you would like us to provide a bicycle for you.

16) *Where can I go for more information on the tour?*

You can go to the Cycle Mission website at www.cyclemission.org to download the trip brochure, more detailed trip information, and the sponsorship form. You can also become a fan of Cycle Mission on Facebook, (the link is on the home page of the Cycle Mission website), and receive regular updates on the trip and other Cycle Mission activities via Facebook as new posts are made. You can also email any of the trip organizers (see their emails on the "Contact Us" page of their respective websites), and/or you can contact Dos Plumas Travel directly (information provided earlier). All trip organizers have extensive experience around the world organizing bike tours and custom travel, and would be delighted to answer any questions you might have.

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU ON THE "SEVEN CHURCHES OF REVELATION" TOUR!