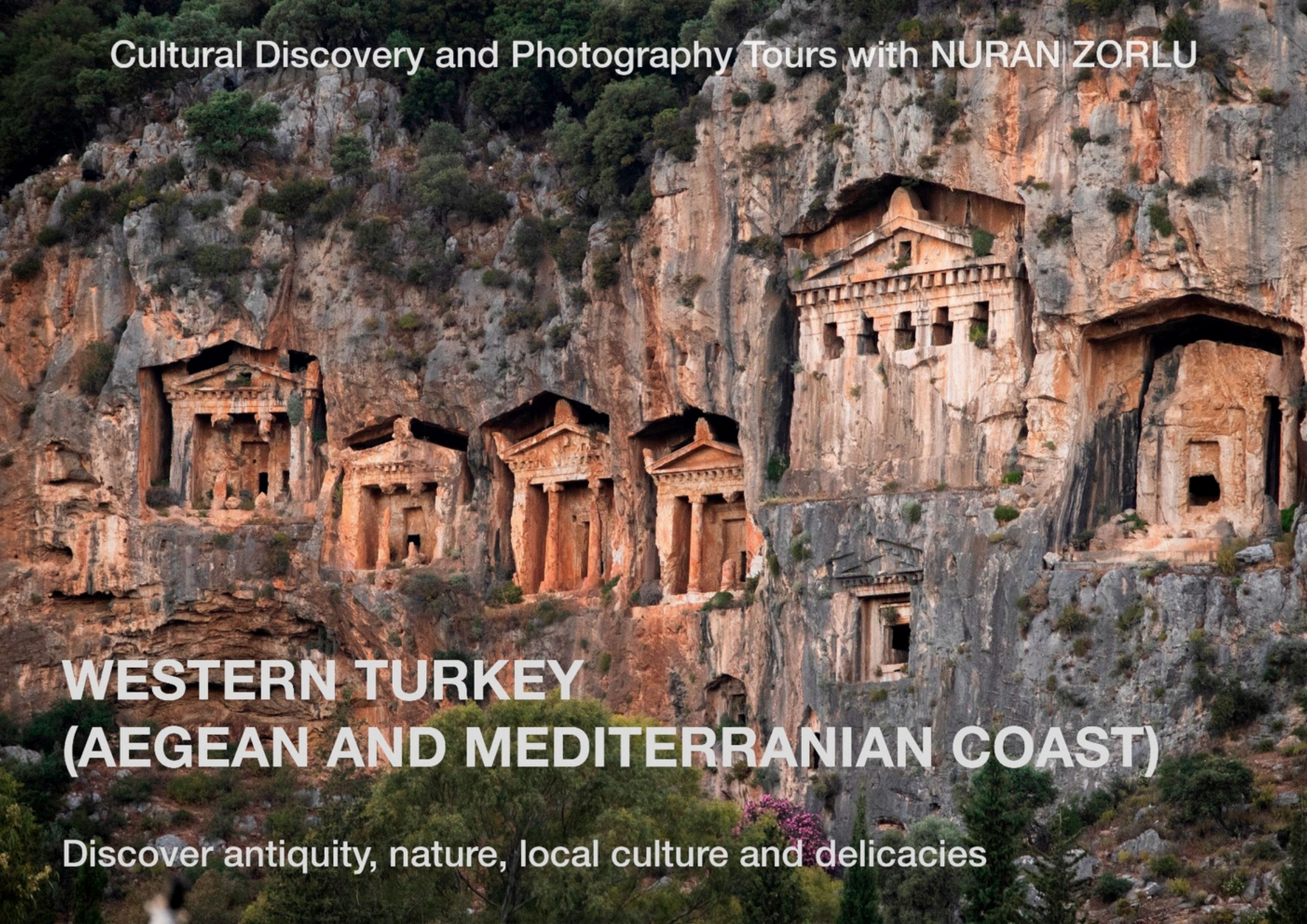




Cultural Discovery and Photography Tours with NURAN ZORLU

WESTERN TURKEY (AEGEAN AND MEDITERRANIAN COAST)

Discover antiquity, nature, local culture and delicacies

There are journeys that show us monuments, landscapes, and museums. And then there are journeys that slowly transform the way we see the world. For many years, I have traveled across Anatolia not simply to visit ancient sites, but to understand how civilizations leave traces behind — in stone, in landscapes, in food, in silence, and in memory.

This journey through Western Anatolia is designed as more than a cultural tour. It is an exploration of the civilizations that shaped the intellectual and spiritual foundations of the Mediterranean world. From Gallipoli and Troy to Assos, Pergamon, Ephesus, Aphrodisias, and the Lycian coast, we travel through landscapes where myth, philosophy, empire, trade, and early Christianity once intersected.

But this journey is not about rushing from one ruin to another. We travel slowly.

We take time for conversations, photography, local cuisine, changing light, and the atmosphere of place itself. Because to truly understand a landscape, we must allow it to reveal itself gradually.

Throughout history, Anatolia has never been a borderland. It has been a meeting place — of ideas, peoples, religions, and civilizations. Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Seljuks, Ottomans, and countless others all left their traces here, layered upon one another like living archaeology.

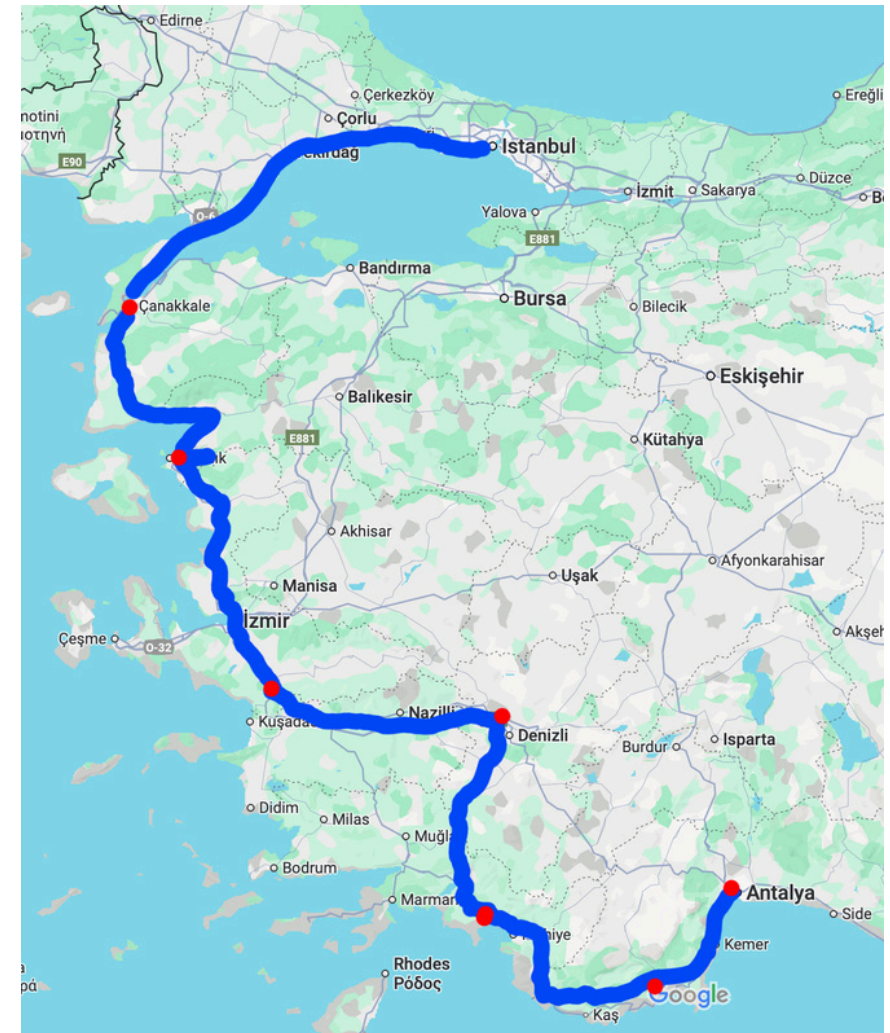
As we move south toward the Mediterranean, the journey itself begins to change. Monumental cities gradually give way to rivers, mountains, coastal ruins, and the sea. The rhythm softens. History becomes quieter, more intimate, more reflective.

One of my favorite sayings is:
“Once you enter the alleys of history, there is no way out.”

And perhaps that is the true spirit of this journey.

Because history is not only about the past. It is also about understanding who we are, how landscapes shape civilizations, and how memory continues to live around us.

I’m Nuran Zorlu — traveler, photographer, cultural guide, and storyteller — and I invite you to join me on this journey through the civilizations, landscapes, and living memory of Anatolia.





Trip Notes

DAY 1 — Istanbul to Çanakkale (overnight Canakkale)

Memory & the Dardanelles

Our journey begins with a gradual departure from Istanbul toward the Dardanelles, a narrow passage of water that has shaped the fate of civilizations for thousands of years. Along the Gallipoli Peninsula, the landscape itself becomes a form of memory. The hills, coves, and windswept ridges carry stories of empire, sacrifice, nationalism, and loss. Yet beyond military history, Gallipoli invites us to reflect on how landscapes absorb human experience and continue to hold emotional resonance long after conflict has passed.

As we arrive in Çanakkale in the evening, the rhythm of the journey begins to slow. Over our first dinner together, we introduce the broader themes of the expedition: civilizations, continuity, memory, and the ways in which geography shapes human imagination. The Dardanelles remind us that borders are never merely political—they are also cultural, philosophical, and deeply human.

DAY 2 — Troy & Assos (overnight Assos)

Myth & Philosophy

At Troy we encounter one of humanity's foundational landscapes of imagination. Troy exists simultaneously as archaeology, literature, and myth. Here, layers of ruined cities become reflections on time itself—how stories survive, how civilizations disappear, and how memory often outlives stone. Standing among these ancient remains, we begin to ask not only what happened here, but why certain places continue to live so vividly within the human imagination.

Further south, overlooking the Aegean Sea, Assos offers a completely different atmosphere. Aristotle once walked these hills and reflected on ethics, politics, and the nature of a meaningful life. It is difficult not to wonder why philosophy so often emerges beside horizons and open water. Here, among olive trees, stone houses, and sea light, contemplation feels less like abstraction and more like a natural extension of landscape itself.

DAY3 -- Pergamom (overnight Bergama)

The Aegean World

Today we continue south through the landscapes of the northern Aegean, where rugged coastlines, olive groves, and distant island horizons reveal a slower Mediterranean rhythm shaped over millennia. The road itself becomes part of the experience — a gradual transition from the mythic world of Troy and the philosophical quiet of Assos toward the intellectual grandeur of Pergamon. Along these shores, one senses how geography shaped the civilizations of the Aegean: open to exchange, movement, trade, and ideas carried across the sea.

As we approach Bergama, ancient Pergamon slowly emerges above the surrounding valley, once one of the great intellectual capitals of the Hellenistic world. Here the journey enters a new philosophical terrain — no longer centered solely on myth and memory, but on knowledge, power, medicine, architecture, and the human ambition to organize the world through reason and ideas. In Pergamon, civilization reveals both its brilliance and its fragility, reminding us that every great center of knowledge ultimately becomes part of history's layered silence.





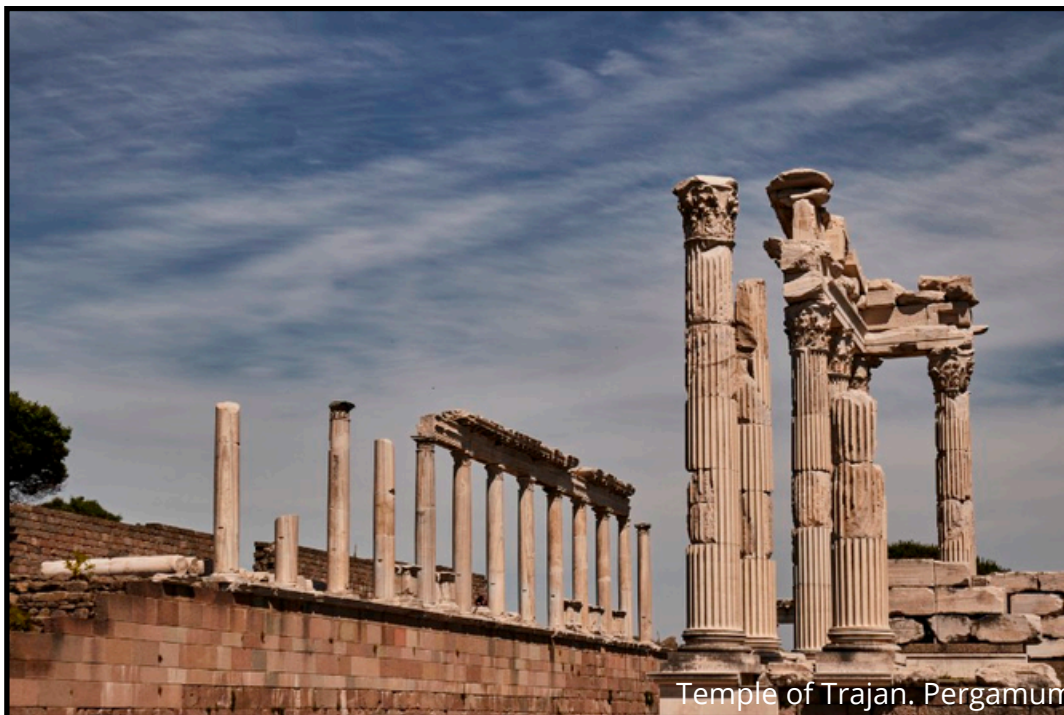
Clockwise, Anzac Cove, Lone Pine Cemetery, fallen soldiers, Troy



Aegean Coast facing Lesbos island



3rd century BC theater of Pergamum



Temple of Trajan. Pergamum

DAY 4 — Pergamon (overnight Bergama)

Knowledge, Power & Revelation

Pergamon Acropolis stands as one of the great intellectual and political centers of the ancient Mediterranean. High above the valley, the acropolis reflects humanity's desire not merely to inhabit landscapes, but to dominate and organize them.

Pergamon was a city of libraries, medicine, monumental architecture, and imperial ambition. Here, knowledge itself became a form of power.

Yet Pergamon also reveals the fragility of greatness. Civilizations rise with confidence, believing their systems permanent, yet time transforms even the grandest cities into ruins. Later Christian communities would reinterpret these same spaces through entirely different spiritual frameworks. Walking through Pergamon allows us to reflect on how each era inherits the physical remains of previous worlds and gives them new meanings.

DAY 5 — Thyatira, Sardis & Selçuk(overnight Selcuk)

Inland Civilizations & Early Christianity

Today we move inland through the fertile valleys of western Anatolia, following routes once used by merchants, pilgrims, soldiers, and philosophers. At Thyatira and especially Sardis, we encounter civilizations shaped not by the sea, but by trade, wealth, and agricultural abundance. Sardis, capital of ancient Lydia and home of the legendary King Croesus, invites reflection on prosperity, fragility, and the recurring human belief that wealth can secure permanence.

Yet alongside Roman grandeur and Jewish diaspora history, these landscapes also contain the early Christian communities of the Seven Churches tradition. In this region, multiple worlds coexisted simultaneously—Greek, Roman, Jewish, and Christian—each shaping the moral and spiritual imagination of Asia Minor. The day becomes an exploration of continuity rather than replacement: civilizations rarely disappear entirely; they transform and endure in unexpected ways.

DAY 6 — Ephesus (overnight Selcuk)

Urban Civilization at Its Peak

Few ancient cities reveal the sophistication of Roman urban life as powerfully as Ephesus. Marble streets, libraries, theaters, bathhouses, and public spaces reflect a civilization deeply invested in commerce, order, spectacle, and civic identity.

Ephesus was not a remote provincial city, but a cosmopolitan center connected to trade networks stretching across the Mediterranean and beyond.

Yet beneath its grandeur lies a deeper question: what allows cities to flourish, and why do even the most advanced urban civilizations eventually decline? Walking through Ephesus encourages us to think about the relationship between prosperity and impermanence. The city also reminds us that Christianity first spread not through isolated villages, but through highly sophisticated urban centers where ideas, beliefs, and identities constantly interacted.



Hierapolis, Pamukkale



The Library of Celsus, Ephesus



Detail of the Temple of Hadrian, Ephesus



The Sebasteion , Aphrodisias



The Roman Theatre, Aphrodisias

DAY 7 — Sacred Selçuk(overnight Selcuk)

Sacred Continuities

Today offers a slower rhythm, allowing time for reflection and immersion in the spiritual landscapes surrounding Selçuk. Whether visiting the Basilica of St. John, the House of the Virgin Mary, or the hillside village of Şirince, we encounter places where sacred traditions continue to shape daily life and collective memory. This quieter day invites us to consider how faith becomes embedded in geography. Sacred places are rarely accidental; they emerge where landscape, story, and human longing intersect. As we move between churches, villages, cafés, and olive groves, the journey becomes less about monumental history and more about continuity—how beliefs, rituals, and ways of life survive through generations.

DAY 8 — Aphrodisias & Pamukkale(overnight Pamukkale)

Beauty, Sculpture & the Human Form

At Aphrodisias we encounter one of the great artistic centers of the Roman world. This is a city where marble was transformed into philosophy made visible. Sculptors here explored the human body not simply as anatomy, but as an expression of beauty, harmony, and human aspiration. In many ways, Aphrodisias reflects the ancient belief that aesthetics and civilization are inseparable. The atmosphere here is quieter and more contemplative than Ephesus. The vast stadium, scattered columns, and open landscapes create a feeling of intimacy with antiquity itself. By evening, as we arrive at Pamukkale, the journey begins to shift once again—from the monumental toward the elemental: stone, water, light, and the healing qualities of landscape.

DAY 9 — Laodicea & Hierapolis (overnight Pamukkale)

Healing, Faith & Mortality

Today we explore two cities deeply connected by geography, trade, and spirituality. Laodicea on the Lycus reflects wealth, commerce, and the complexities of early Christianity within the Roman world. Here we begin to understand how economic prosperity and spiritual questioning often coexist uneasily within civilizations. At Hierapolis and the terraces of Pamukkale, water becomes central to the story. For thousands of years, people traveled here seeking healing, purification, and renewal. The necropolis surrounding the city reminds us that places associated with healing are often also places where mortality becomes most visible. As the sun sets across the white travertines, the landscape itself feels suspended between beauty and impermanence.

DAY 10 — Pamukkale to Dalyan (overnight Dalyan)

Toward the Mediterranean

As we leave the inland plateau and move southwest toward Dalyan, the atmosphere of the journey gradually softens. The monumental cities of empire begin to give way to rivers, reeds, mountains, and Mediterranean light. This transition is important. Civilizations are not experienced only through ruins, but also through changing landscapes and rhythms of life. Dalyan introduces a quieter, more intimate relationship between people and environment. Here the river, wetlands, and surrounding mountains create a feeling of calm after the intensity of earlier archaeological sites. The Mediterranean begins to emerge not simply as geography, but as mood and atmosphere.

DAY 11 — Kaunos & Dalyan (overnight Dalyan)

River Civilizations & Maritime Landscapes

At Kaunos we encounter a city shaped by both land and water. Harbors, trade routes, and river systems connected this region to the wider Mediterranean world, while the dramatic rock tombs carved into cliffs remind us of humanity's enduring dialogue with mortality and landscape. Today is also about slowing down. Boat rides through the reeds, shifting light on the water, and quiet conversations become part of the experience. The Mediterranean world was never built only by empires—it was also shaped by sailors, fishermen, merchants, and small coastal communities living between sea and land.

DAY 12 — Xanthos, Letoon & Patara (overnight Kas)

Lycian Civilization & the Mediterranean Imagination

The Lycian world introduces an entirely different political and cultural imagination. Unlike centralized empires, Lycia developed forms of federation, regional identity, and maritime autonomy deeply connected to geography. At Xanthos, Letoon, and Patara we encounter a civilization shaped equally by mountains and sea. Patara especially reveals the Mediterranean at its most expansive. Harbors connected worlds, while ideas, religions, and goods moved continuously across these waters. Standing among dunes, ruins, and evening light, we begin to understand the Mediterranean not as a boundary between continents, but as one of humanity's great cultural bridges.

DAY 13 — Kekova & Antalya(overnight Antalya)

Sea, Silence & Reflection

Around Kekova and Simena, ancient ruins dissolve into sea and light. Civilizations here seem less monumental and more fragile—partially submerged, weathered, and absorbed into the landscape itself. This is one of the most poetic sections of the journey, where silence and open water become as meaningful as history. As we continue toward Antalya, the Mediterranean reveals itself fully. The sea has carried not only armies and trade, but philosophies, stories, and ways of seeing the world. Today becomes a reflection on movement, connection, and the enduring human attraction to coastlines and horizons.

DAY 14-15- — Antalya (overnight Antalya)

The Mediterranean as Civilization

Antalya is often seen simply as a resort city, yet beneath its modern energy lies a layered Mediterranean history stretching from antiquity through Byzantium and the Ottoman world into the present day. In Kaleiçi and the old harbor, we encounter the Mediterranean as a living continuity rather than a vanished past. This final day is intentionally spacious. Museums, cafés, conversations, food, sea light, and evening walks allow the journey to settle emotionally. The expedition concludes not with a dramatic ending, but with a quieter realization: civilizations endure not only through monuments, but through atmosphere, memory, and the ways human beings continue to inhabit landscapes shaped by centuries of history.



Villa detail, Ephesus



Detail from Sebasteion, Aphrodisias Museum

"Once you enter the alleys of history, there is no way out."



Hierapolis Thermals, Pamukkale



5th BC Lycian Tombs, Dalyan River





Pamukkale

Nuran Zorlu, an Australian commercial and advertising photographer, boasts over two decades of industry expertise. A recipient of the AIPP Travel Photographer of the Year (NSW) award twice, his work has garnered acclaim in competitions like 'Head On' and 'Shoot the Chef.' As an esteemed photography teacher and judge in Australian competitions, Nuran's influence extends beyond his captivating visuals.

His travel photography, showcased in prominent exhibitions and publications, reflects his passion for exploring diverse cultures. Nuran has lectured on travel photography and history at esteemed institutions like the Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney University, Cezayir Cultural Centre in Istanbul, and the 2016 Tehran International Book Fair. His images have adorned the walls of both NSW and Victorian parliament houses.

Born in Istanbul to Armenian parents, Nuran is multilingual, fluent in English, Turkish, Armenian, and a bit of Persian. Holding a degree in philosophy and sociology from Istanbul University, he possesses a profound love for the region's history. This unique blend of cultural insight and photographic prowess ensures that Nuran's travel photography workshops transcend mere technical lessons, offering an intimate understanding of the regions and their inhabitants.

Nuran's illustrated travel journal, "Persia to Iran," garnered attention on ABC radio and featured in a BBC World Service documentary. He conducts photography workshops in Armenia, Georgia, Turkey, Central Asia and Iran, further enriching participants with his regional expertise.

Beyond photography, Nuran's passion for food adds a flavorful dimension to his tours. A connoisseur of local dishes and the best regional restaurants, he ensures participants not only capture moments but also savor the culinary delights each region has to offer. Join Nuran Zorlu on a journey where photography becomes a gateway to cultural understanding, and every frame tells a story of history, diversity, and delectable experiences





On the way to Iztuzu beach, Dalyan River

Terms and Conditions

HEALTH REQUIREMENT

The workshop is designed for people of all ages in good health and moderate fitness. Nuran Zorlu cannot accept responsibility for losses or extra expenses caused by, but not limited to, delays, changes in transportation services, weather, illness, injury, strike, quarantine, or other causes. Participants should be cautious during activities like hikes in National Parks, involving short steep descents and climbs. We will comply with National Parks' safety requirements, but participants need to be careful and inform us of any concerns about their capabilities before booking. Nuran Zorlu reserves the right to cancel any workshop, with a full refund. Participants must carry their camera equipment and water for activities.

RESERVATIONS

Workshops are limited to a maximum of 8 participants, with a minimum of 5 required. Places will be confirmed based on receipt of payment or deposit. Contact Nuran Zorlu at nuran@nuranzorlu.com or call 0413 619 292 to book.

PRICE

DISCOVER WONDERS OF WESTERN TURKEY

(AEGEAN AND MEDITERRANEAN COAST)

29th APRIL to 14th May 2027

Tour cost EURO 7850

Single room Supplement EURO 1200

Deposit to secure your place EURO 1500

PRICE INCLUDES/EXCLUDES:

Domestic flight Antalya to Istanbul)

Accommodation in 3 or 4star hotels or traditional homes.

All breakfasts.

Admission fees to museums and places in the itinerary.

Comfortable AC/van, driver, gas, parking, bottled water the vehicle.

The price does not include international airfare, tips, gratuities, and travel insurance.

DEPOSIT & PAYMENT

A deposit upon booking to reserve your place EURO 1500

Final payment by 29 JAN 2027

CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS

Deposits are refundable up to 90 days prior to the event.

If canceling more than 90 days from the tour date, we will refund your deposit in full.

If the tour is not full, and we have the minimum number of bookings, we will refund your deposit in full.

If the tour is full, and you cancel within 90 days of the workshop date, we won't refund unless your place is filled by someone else.

No part refunds for unused portions of tour services

INSURANCE

Participants are advised to obtain their own insurance suitable for their needs.

RESPONSIBILITY

Nuran Zorlu has limited responsibility and may organise programs from various suppliers. Nuran Zorlu is not liable for any negligent or willful act or failure of any supplier. By participating, you agree that Nuran Zorlu shall not be liable for these failings.

These Terms and Conditions are governed by the laws of New South Wales, Australia. Participants must agree to the Acceptance of Risk Release before the workshop. In the absence of signing the release, attendance confirms acceptance of these Terms and Conditions.

Cultural discovery and photography tours with NURAN ZORLU

WESTERN TURKEY
29th APRIL to 14th May 2027

7850 EURO
(single persons up. 1200 EURO)



W www.nuranzorlu.com E nuran@nuranzorlu.com M (61) 0413619292