



Sunday, Full Day Tour to *Ephesus*
(June 30, 2013 – Complimentary for Registered Participants, Only)

1. Buses will leave the Swissôtel Grand Efes, Izmir at 9:00 am

2. The *Virgin Mary House*

First stop will be the *Virgin Mary House*, located beyond Ephesus and on Bulbul Dag (mountain), 8 km southwest of Selcuk. The monument is thought to be where the *Virgin Mary* died. It is visited by Christian and Muslim pilgrims from around the world. The small stone house is used as a chapel and dates back to the 4th century AD, but the foundations are thought to be of the 1st century AD.

It was not until a German nun, Catherine Emmerich (1774-1824) claimed that she had visions of *Mary* living in a small stone house, even though she never left Germany. Following her descriptions, 19th century clergy discovered the foundations of the house, which was then verified by a Papal visit in 1967. Since then, it has been accepted that *Mary* spent her last few years there until her death at the age of 101.

3. *Ephesus*

The second stop will be *Ephesus*, which was one of the twelve Ionian cities, developed as a result of the union of the Ionian immigrants with the natives living near the temple of *Kybele*. Afterwards, the spectacular temple built for the Greek Goddess *Artemis*, would be famous as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. Like the other Ionian cities, *Ephesus* was ruled by *Lydia*, *Persia*, *Macedonia* and lastly by *Rome*. This city was one of the most popular cities of the ancient world and was given special attention by many Hellenistic Kings. For instance it is known that *Lysimakhos* built this city and gave it his wife, *Arsinoe's* name, and that the king of *Pergamon Attalos II*, enlarged the port. Because the Romans made *Ephesus* the capital of the Asian State, the city became one of the biggest

settlements in Anatolia. The city was an important center for Christianity at this time. Owing to its wonderful position and associated ports, Ephesus became Anatolia's biggest trade center. The Celsus library, the theatre, stadium, gymnasium, the temples and the famous baths are responsible for this city becoming sports, religious, cultural and entertainment center especially in Roman times.

4. Ephesus Terrace Houses

The next stop will be the *Ephesus terrace houses*, located on the hill, opposite the Hadrian Temple. Also, called "*the houses of rich*", provides information about family life during the Roman period. There are six residential units on three terraces at the lower end of the slope of the Bulbul Mountain. The oldest building dates back into the 1st century BC and was used as residence until the 7th century AD. The mosaics on the floor and the frescos have been consolidated and two houses have been opened to the public as a museum.

5. Lunch will be served in a local restaurant

6. Şirince Village

Last stop will be the *Şirince Village*, located 7 km through the hills from Selcuk. It is attractive for its setting among fruit orchards, old-fashioned stone houses with red tiled roofs and narrow streets. It is also famous for its homemade wine, and lace made by the local women. Once known as Kirkince, the village was built by the Greeks about 800 years ago, and, since the population exchange in 1924, has been inhabited by Muslims from Salonica. The village has a few guest-houses and restaurants, and is popular with foreign and Turkish tourists to experience a taste of traditional village life in a peaceful environment. According to certain interpretations derived from the Mayan calendar, December 21st would be 'Judgment Day' all over the world, except for two locations, one of which is Şirince. This prediction has of course resulted in a continuous influx of people from all over the world to the town with a population of 700.

With accommodation in Şirince had exceeded capacity, the crowds continued to flock to the hillside town and many arrived by caravan. A majority of those seeking accommodation at this stage were actually not 'doomsday' believers, but were more interested in taking this opportunity to visit the historical town. Those who believed in the prophecies surrounding December 21st, had booked their rooms way in advance and with their accommodation secured.

You may enjoy a carpet demonstration and some time for shopping

7. Return back to Swissôtel Grand Efes, Izmir