



The Hittite Heritage Route

Cultural Heritage Tour / Archaeological & Experiential Journey

Cappadocia – Kayseri (Kültepe-Kaniş) – Çorum (Hattusa) – Ankara (Museum of Anatolian Civilizations)

3 DAYS

The Hittites — the mysterious empire of ancient Anatolia. Rising during the 2nd millennium BCE, they became one of the great powers of the ancient Near East alongside Egypt and Babylon. Under King Hattusili I, founder of the Hittite state and the capital Hattusa, the empire expanded across Anatolia and shaped the region's history for centuries.

This route takes travelers through royal cities, sacred sanctuaries, and ancient trade centers, from Kültepe to the monumental capital of Hattusa. "The Hittites: Anatolia's Lost Kingdom" offers a journey into one of Anatolia's most influential civilizations and its enduring legacy.

Group Size: Carefully curated small groups, minimum 2 and maximum 12 guests, ensuring comfort, exclusive access, and personalized guidance throughout the journey.





ITINERARY



I. Day – Kültepe Kaniš (Neša): Where Writing Began

Explore Kültepe, the ancient city of Kaniš, home to Anatolia's earliest written records. Discover the Assyrian merchants' trading center and the cuneiform tablets that reveal daily life, commerce, and law nearly 4,000 years ago.



II. Day – Hattusa & Yazılıkaya: Heart of the Hittite Empire

Visit the UNESCO-listed capital of the Hittite Empire and walk through its monumental gates, temples, and fortifications. Continue to the sacred sanctuary of Yazılıkaya, famous for its remarkable rock-carved reliefs of gods and kings.



III. Day – Museum of Anatolian Civilizations: Preserving the Legacy

Conclude the journey in Ankara with a visit to one of the world's finest archaeological museums. Discover masterpieces from the Hittites and other Anatolian civilizations while gaining a deeper understanding of Anatolia's rich cultural heritage.



Tour Organizer and Storyteller



Dr. Tibethan MEMİŞOĞLU specializes in sustainable tourism, destination management, cultural heritage, and community-based tourism development in Cappadocia. As Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Kelebek Group, he leads initiatives that integrate local communities, cultural heritage, and sustainability into tourism experiences.

He holds a degree in International Relations from Istanbul Kadir Has University, a Master's degree in Political Science and United Nations Studies from Long Island University, New York, and a PhD in Sustainable Tourism from Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University. His doctoral research focused on destination success criteria and sustainable destination management.

During his career, he participated in UNFPA-supported projects in Panama and worked on regional development initiatives in both Türkiye and Africa.

Since moving to Cappadocia in 2016, he spent nearly a decade as a Regional Development Expert at the Ahiler Development Agency under the Ministry of Industry and Technology of Türkiye, leading cultural, social, and tourism development projects.

His work has focused on developing cultural routes that strengthen regional identity, support local communities, and encourage the discovery of alternative destinations. He has contributed to both academic and practical initiatives promoting sustainable destination management.

As COO of Kelebek Group, Dr. MEMİŞOĞLU oversees the development of tourism products, cultural heritage experiences, and regional collaborations. He specializes in transforming UNESCO World Heritage and cultural assets into meaningful visitor experiences.

One of his key projects is The Hittite Heritage Route, a cultural journey linking Cappadocia, Kültepe-Kaniş, Kayseri, Hattuşa, and Ankara. Developed in collaboration with archaeologists, historians, local communities, and public institutions, the route was designed not only as a tourism product but also as a sustainable development initiative supporting local economies while showcasing the legacy of the Hittite civilization.

Tour Highlights



Explore the origins of Anatolia's first written records at Kültepe Kaniš Karum, home to thousands of Assyrian cuneiform tablets.



Discover the rise of the Hittite Empire, one of the great powers of the ancient Near East alongside Egypt and Babylon.



Visit Hattusa, the UNESCO-listed capital of the Hittites, featuring monumental gates, royal temples, and impressive fortifications.



Walk through the sacred sanctuary of Yazılıkaya, famous for its extraordinary rock-carved reliefs of Hittite gods and kings.



Gain deeper insight into Hittite culture, religion, diplomacy, and daily life through archaeological discoveries and ancient inscriptions.



Experience the cultural atmosphere and regional gastronomy of Central Anatolia in Çorum, gateway to the Hittite heartland.



Visit the renowned Museum of Anatolian Civilizations, one of the world's leading archaeological museums and winner of the European Museum of the Year Award.



Trace the complete story of Anatolian civilizations, from the Assyrians and Hittites to Phrygia and Urartu, through world-class museum collections.



Journey through ancient trade centers, royal capitals, sacred spaces, and archaeological landmarks that shaped Anatolian history for centuries.



Enjoy a unique cultural and archaeological experience designed for history enthusiasts, cultural travelers, and lovers of ancient civilizations.



The Hittite Empire

The Hittite Empire is an ancient Anatolian civilization that emerged around 1650 BCE within the Kızılırmak bend (Halys River curve) in Central Anatolia and existed for approximately five centuries. With its capital at Hattusa, this great power expanded its borders from the Aegean coastline to Northern Syria and Mesopotamia, becoming one of the most significant empires of its era.

The Hittites referred to the lands they ruled as the “Land of Hatti” and regarded this geography not merely as a political entity, but as a sacred homeland—the dwelling place of the gods.

Culturally known as the “**People of a Thousand Gods**,” the Hittites developed a profound relationship with nature, considering mountains, rivers, and water sources as sacred. As a result, they constructed monumental open-air sanctuaries and religious complexes in these natural settings. Religious festivals and rituals were central to state life; the king and queen traveled across the kingdom to perform ceremonies and present offerings of devotion to the gods in these sacred spaces. These practices enabled the Hittites to unify the diverse populations of Anatolia under a shared imperial narrative and religious culture.

The Hittites were also highly advanced in technology and governance for their time. Their expertise in metallurgy was particularly notable, with pioneering developments not only in copper, gold, and silver, but also in early iron production technology. Placing strong emphasis on diplomacy, they recorded interstate treaties and laws on silver or bronze tablets, establishing a sophisticated administrative system. The empire shaped the destiny of the region until the mid-12th century BCE, equipping the harsh Anatolian landscape with roads, dams, and fortified strongholds.



DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1.

Where Writing Began: Kültepe Kaniš Karum

Known in antiquity as Kaniš or Neša, Kültepe was one of Anatolia's earliest trade and cultural centers. During the Assyrian Trade Colonies Period, it became famous for thousands of cuneiform tablets — the earliest written documents discovered in Anatolia — revealing ancient trade, law, and daily life.

The journey then continues to Çorum, gateway to the Hittite heartland and nearby Hattusa. Visitors can experience local culture and regional gastronomy shaped by centuries of Anatolian and Hittite heritage.



DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 2.



Heart of the Hittite Empire: Hattusa & Yazılıkaya

Hattusa, the great capital of the Hittite Empire, was once the political and religious center of ancient Anatolia. Protected by massive walls and monumental gates, the city showcases the power and engineering skill of the Hittites.

Visitors explore iconic landmarks such as the Lion Gate, royal temples, and the underground postern tunnel.

The journey continues to Yazılıkaya, the Hittites' sacred open-air sanctuary, famous for its rock-carved reliefs of gods, kings, and mythological figures. A visit to the Boğazköy Archaeological Museum further reveals the richness of Hittite civilization through cuneiform tablets, seals, and ceremonial artifacts.



DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 3.



Preserving the Legacy: Museum of Anatolian Civilizations

Located in the historic center of Ankara, the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations is one of the world's leading archaeological museums and was named "European Museum of the Year" in 1997.

Its remarkable collection presents the history of Anatolia from the Paleolithic Age to the Classical Period, including important artifacts from the Hittites, Assyrian Trade Colonies, Phrygia, and Urartu civilizations. This final stop offers visitors a deeper understanding of Anatolia's rich cultural heritage and the lasting legacy of the Hittites.



The Significance of the Treaty of Kadesh

The Treaty of Kadesh, concluded between the Hittite Empire and Egypt under Ramesses II, is widely regarded as the earliest surviving written peace treaty in history. Beyond ending long-standing conflict, it established a formal diplomatic framework based on mutual recognition, non-aggression, and alliance, marking a turning point in the history of international relations in the ancient world.

The Treaty of Kadesh, signed on equal terms and regarded as the earliest known international peace agreement in history, was concluded in 1269 BCE between the Hittite King Hattusili III and the Egyptian Pharaoh Ramesses II. It was written in Akkadian, the diplomatic language of the time. Three surviving copies of the treaty in Akkadian are known to exist.

In the joint Turkish–German excavations conducted in 1906 by Hugo Winckler and Theodor Makridy, one of the copies of the treaty was discovered at the capital site in Boğazköy–Büyükkale, located in Çorum, which is one of the stops on this tour route. One copy is now housed in Berlin, while the other two are kept at the Istanbul Archaeology Museums.

It is believed that the Egyptian–Hittite peace treaty exhibited at the Istanbul Archaeology Museums is the earliest known example of any written international agreement.



This relief at Abu Simbel depicts the story of the Battle of Kadesh. Pharaoh Ramesses II (upper left) is shown firing arrows from his chariot while being surrounded by advancing Hittite chariot warriors.



Breakfast and Meal:

Throughout the journey, breakfast is included at the hotel. The lunch will primarily be organized, whenever possible, at local and boutique establishments. In line with our company philosophy, preference will be given to women's cooperatives, local restaurants, markets, and authentic food venues that meet our standards along the route.

Particular emphasis will also be placed on establishments offering geographical indication (GI-certified) products, regional specialties, and locally sourced ingredients, allowing guests to experience the region's cultural and gastronomic heritage in a more genuine, sustainable, and meaningful way.



LOCAL &
BOUTIQUE
RESTAURANTS



WOMEN'S
COOPERATIVES &
LOCAL SUPPORT



GI-CERTIFIED &
REGIONAL
SPECIALTIES



AUTHENTIC &
SUSTAINABLE
EXPERIENCE



Logistics and Comfort:

Throughout the journey, breakfast is included at the hotel. The lunch will primarily be organized, whenever possible, at local and boutique establishments. In line with our company philosophy, preference will be given to women's cooperatives, local restaurants, markets, and authentic food venues that meet our standards along the route.

Particular emphasis will also be placed on establishments offering geographical indication (GI-certified) products, regional specialties, and locally sourced ingredients, allowing guests to experience the region's cultural and gastronomic heritage in a more genuine, sustainable, and meaningful way.



Göreme (Cappadocia) – Kayseri

The tour will depart from Göreme, Cappadocia in the morning and continue through Kayseri, Kültepe (Kaniş Karum) Archaeological Site where lunch will be organized in the surrounding area.



Çorum

After departing Kayseri and following approximately three hours of overland travel, arrival in the city center of Çorum is planned for the evening. Accommodation will be provided in Çorum at a five-star hotel or at a carefully selected boutique hotel offering a high standard of comfort and hospitality for our guests.



Ankara

Following Çorum, the journey will continue with approximately 2.5 hours of overland travel to the capital city of Ankara. Accommodation in Ankara will be provided at a five-star hotel or at a carefully selected boutique hotel that meets the comfort and service standards of our program.



Note

Accommodation arrangements will be finalized in consultation with the guest during the tour planning process, taking into consideration individual preferences, comfort expectations, and availability.



ÇORUM



ANKARA



Physical Requirements:

This journey includes moderate walking at archaeological sites, open-air museums, and historical landscapes, some of which feature uneven, rocky, or slightly sloped terrain. Participants should be comfortable walking for extended periods and navigating light inclines, stairs, and unpaved paths. Comfortable walking shoes, sun protection, and weather-appropriate clothing are strongly recommended to fully enjoy the experience.

MODERATE WALKING

This journey includes moderate walking at archaeological sites, open-air museums, and historical landscapes, some of which feature uneven, rocky, or slightly sloped terrain.



Participants should be comfortable walking for **extended periods** and navigating light inclines, stairs, and unpaved paths.



Comfortable walking shoes, **sun protection**, and **weather-appropriate clothing** are strongly recommended to fully enjoy the experience.



Stay hydrated, pace yourself, and take in the incredible history and views along the way.



UNEVEN &
ROCKY TERRAIN



LIGHT INCLINES
& STAIRS



UNPAVED
PATHS



SUN
PROTECTION



WEATHER-
APPROPRIATE
CLOTHING



STAY HYDRATED
& PACE YOURSELF



Transportation & Professional Guidance

- *This journey includes moderate walking at archaeological sites, open-air museums, and historical landscapes, some of which feature uneven, rocky, or slightly sloped terrain.*
- *Participants should be comfortable walking for extended periods and navigating light inclines, stairs, and unpaved paths. Comfortable walking shoes, sun protection, and weather-appropriate clothing are strongly recommended to fully enjoy the experience.*

✓ Tour Including:

- Airport transfers where needed.
- Transportation by a comfortable AC non smoking Luxurious car/Van with professional driver.
- Professional and experienced licensed guide during the tours.
- Accommodation in Charming or Deluxe superior Hotels.
- Entry fees to the sites and museums.
- Breakfast included in the hotel.
- Lunch during the tour.
- Parking fees.

✗ Tour Excluding:

- International flights
- Hot air balloon flight
- Dinner
- Drinks
- Tips to guide, driver and hotel personnel



About Kelebek Travel and Kelebek Tour Programs

Kelebek Group is a family-owned company founded by the Yavuz family, originally from Göreme, Cappadocia. Through its tourism investments, the group is committed to preserving Anatolia's cultural heritage while promoting local communities, sustainability, and visitor satisfaction.

Beyond tourism operations, Kelebek Group supports various social responsibility and environmental initiatives. Its projects are developed in collaboration with archaeologists, academics, gastronomy experts, art historians, and other cultural heritage professionals to create authentic and meaningful visitor experiences.

Although Göreme Kelebek Travel was officially established in 2019, the group's tourism experience dates back to 1993 through its hospitality operations in Cappadocia. Today, Kelebek Travel provides comprehensive travel services across Türkiye and is an active member of TÜRSAB.

The company organizes both private and group tours in Cappadocia, as well as multi-day cultural journeys throughout Türkiye. In addition, it designs tailor-made experiences, including special events, celebrations, weddings, corporate gatherings, and exclusive activities that showcase the unique character of the region.

For more information, please visit our website. <https://www.kelebek-group.com/>



Sustainable Tourism and Regional Development Policy

- Kelebek Group supports regional development through social responsibility initiatives aligned with its sustainable tourism approach. The Group collaborates with women's cooperatives, women entrepreneurs, and local producers, helping strengthen local economies while preserving traditional products and cultural values.
- Through cultural and experiential tourism, Kelebek Group enables visitors to engage directly with local life, traditional production practices, and cultural heritage, contributing to both economic and cultural sustainability.
- Cultural programs such as the Hittite Route also support archaeological and national heritage by increasing awareness of excavation sites, promoting regional cultural assets, and fostering stronger connections between visitors and heritage. These initiatives additionally contribute to the recognition and encouragement of excavation teams working to uncover and preserve Anatolia's past.



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