

The Mustafapaşa (Sinassos) Cultural Heritage Route



TOUR DETAILS

- **Tour Name:** Mustafapaşa Sinassos & Hidden South Cappadocia Heritage Route
- **Destination:** Cappadocia, Ürgüp, Türkiye
- **Tour Type:** Full-Day Guided Cultural & Nature Tour
- **Duration:** Approximately 5–6 Hours
- **Difficulty Level:** Easy to Moderate
- **Transport:** Air-conditioned vehicle + guided walking sections
- **Guide:** Licensed Professional Tour Guide (English-speaking)
- **Group Type:** Private Options Available
- **Departure _Return Time:** 09:30 – 03:30 pm

The Mustafapaşa (Sinastos) Cultural Heritage Route

The **Mustafapaşa (Sinastos) Cultural Heritage Route** offers an immersive journey through one of Cappadocia's most distinctive historic settlements. Combining **architecture, art, religion, geology,** and **local traditions,** the tour explores the rich cultural landscape shaped by centuries of coexistence, trade, education, and faith.

Visitors can expect a balanced experience that blends historical monuments, traditional neighborhoods, religious heritage, geological formations, and scenic valleys. From magnificent merchant mansions and remarkable wall paintings to monasteries, churches, and the unique landscapes of the Cappadocia **Geopark,** the route provides a deeper understanding of the people, stories, and cultural influences that have shaped **Mustafapaşa** throughout its history.

Designed for travelers seeking more than sightseeing, this experience reveals the intellectual, artistic, and multicultural heritage that makes Mustafapaşa one of Cappadocia's most remarkable destinations and a recipient of the **UNWTO "Best Tourism Village" award.**



TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore Mustafapaşa (historic Sinasos), one of Cappadocia's most remarkable heritage towns, with its magnificent stone mansions, Greek inscriptions, and elegant historic architecture.
- Discover the legacy of prosperous nineteenth-century merchant families and the commercial ties that connected Sinasos with Ottoman Istanbul.
- Admire rare figurative wall paintings inspired by European artistic traditions, including *The Calumny of Apelles* and *The Stairway of Life*.
- Visit the Church of Saints Constantine and Helena, the Maraşoğlu Bridge, and the historic Mehmet Şakir Paşa Madrasa.
- Explore the scenic Gibos and Monasteries Valleys, including the Monastery of Saint Nicholas and the Church of Saint Basil.
- Experience the rich architectural, artistic, religious, and cultural heritage of Sinasos and its transformation following the 1923 Population Exchange.
- Explore the scenic Comeda, Gibos, and Monasteries Valleys, including the Monastery of Saint Nicholas and the Church of Saint Basil.



ITINERARY

STOP 1 | WELCOME & INTRODUCTION AT MEHMET ŞAKİR PAŞA MADRASA 🕒

Mustafapaşa (Sinassos), Cappadocia's "golden town," flourished in the 19th century through the caviar and maritime trade in Istanbul. Named after **Seyyid Mustafa Pasha**, the town was home to Greek and Muslim communities until the **1923 Population Exchange**. At this stop, we visit the monumental Mehmet Şakir Paşa Madrasa, located at the entrance to Mustafapaşa, before exploring the town's rich architectural and multicultural heritage.

- Average Visit Duration: 10–20 minutes

STOP 2 | HISTORIC MANSIONS OF SINASOS 🕒

Visit to the Topakoğlu (Teperoğlu) Mansion and Cansever Mansion, showcasing the architectural legacy, artistic patronage, and cosmopolitan outlook of Sinassos' wealthy merchant families.

- Average Visit Duration: 30–40 Minutes

STOP 3 | HISTORIC STREETS, STORY WALK & TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS AND DOORS 🕒

At this stop, we explore Mustafapaşa (Sinassos) as a remarkable example of Greek and Turkish cultural coexistence. Its ornately carved stone doorways, often bearing Greek inscriptions and messages of hospitality, offer a glimpse into the town's multicultural past and shared heritage.

- Average Visit Duration: 30–40 Minutes

• LUNCH Delicious lunch with in Local Restaurant

Lunch at a local restaurant, followed by free time for photography and personal exploration.

STOP 4 | CHURCH OF SAINTS CONSTANTINE & HELENA 🕒

At this stop, we visit the Church of Saints Constantine and Helena, rebuilt in 1850 with the support of wealthy Sinassos merchants in Istanbul. Its Greek inscription, intricate stone carvings, double-headed eagle, and vine motifs reflect the prosperity and artistic heritage of 19th-century Sinassos.

- Average Visit Duration: 20–30 Minutes

ITINERARY

STOP 5| MONASTERIES VALLEY & ST. NICHOLAS MONASTERY



At this stop, we explore Monasteries Valley, a remarkable landscape of rock-cut churches and monastic complexes. At its heart stands the Monastery of St. Nicholas, once revered by both Greek Orthodox and Muslim communities. Its churches, wall paintings, and rock-cut spaces reveal the spiritual and multicultural heritage of historic Sinasos.

- Average Visit Duration: 30-40 Minutes

STOP 6| MUSTAFAPAŞA GEOPARK – GEOLOGY & CULTURAL LANDSCAPE



At this stop, we discover the geological landscape of Mustafapaşa, shaped by millions of years of volcanic activity and erosion. Its colorful tuff formations, fairy chimneys, and valleys not only created Cappadocia's distinctive scenery but also shaped its rock-cut architecture and way of life. This unique combination of geological and cultural heritage forms part of the wider Cappadocia Geopark initiative and its UNESCO Global Geopark candidacy.

- Average Visit Duration: 30-40 Minutes

STOP 7| BEYDERE VALLEY – NATURE, FAITH & LOCAL LEGENDS



At this stop, we explore Beydere Valley, known for its colorful rock formations, fairy chimneys, and dramatic Cappadocian landscape. The valley is home to the rock-cut Church of St. Basil, renowned for its remarkable wall paintings, as well as a natural rock formation traditionally believed to resemble the face of Christ.

- Average Visit Duration: 30-40 Minutes

STOP 8| GOMEDA, GIBOS & MONASTERIES VALLEYS



At this stop, we explore **Gomeda, Gibos, and Monasteries Valleys**, where Cappadocia's dramatic landscape meets centuries of spiritual heritage. Along the route, we discover remarkable rock-cut sites including the Church of St. Basil and Monastery of St. Nicholas, once revered by both Greek Orthodox and Muslim communities.

- Average Visit Duration: 50-60 Minutes

Mustafapaşa (Sinassos): The Story Behind the Names and the Poignant Legacy of the Population Exchange

Nestled in the heart of Cappadocia, the historic town now known as Mustafapaşa has carried many names through the centuries, including Sasima, Asuna, and, most famously, Sinassos. During the nineteenth century, Sinassos flourished as one of Cappadocia's leading intellectual and artistic centres. The town took its present name from the Ottoman statesman **Seyyid Mustafa Paşa**, who visited the area in the early 1800s and commissioned fountains to help address its long-standing water shortage.

Sinassos owed much of its prosperity to local merchants who built successful businesses in caviar trading and maritime transport in Istanbul. They invested their wealth back into their hometown, commissioning grand stone mansions, churches, and schools that gave Sinassos its distinctive elegance and made it one of the most prosperous settlements in the region.



The years **1923–1925** marked a profound turning point. The compulsory **Population Exchange** between Greece and Turkey, agreed under the **Treaty of Lausanne**, brought an end to centuries of coexistence between the town's **Muslim** and **Greek Orthodox** communities (Called Rums in Turkish). The Greek Orthodox inhabitants of Sinassos were forced to leave the land they regarded as their homeland, departing through the port of **Mersin** and eventually establishing **Nea Sinassos (New Sinassos) in Greece**. Their departure was remembered in the poignant words: “Graceful Sinassos, you are our mother.”

At the other end of this forced migration, Muslim families displaced from the Kastoria region of Greece arrived in Mustafapaşa and settled in the homes left behind. Like those who departed, the newcomers carried the pain of leaving familiar landscapes, homes, memories, and ways of life behind.

The Population Exchange therefore meant far more than the movement of people: it displaced entire worlds of memory, identity, and belonging. Today, Greek inscriptions, messages of hospitality carved above doorways, and wall paintings carefully preserved by later residents remain throughout Mustafapaşa.

Together, they stand as silent witnesses to a shared cultural memory, shaped by longing for lost homelands and by the remarkably diverse heritage of Anatolia.



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.

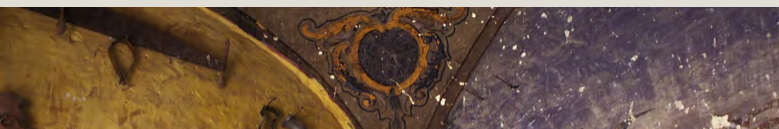
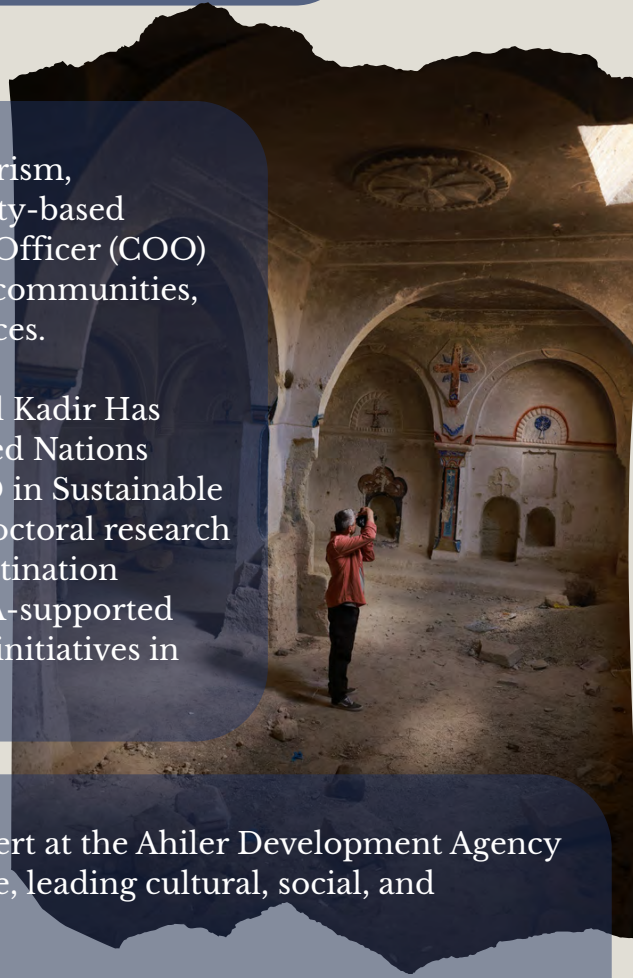
He holds a degree in International Relations from Istanbul Kadir Has University, a Master's degree in Political Science and United Nations Studies from Long Island University, New York, and a PhD in Sustainable Tourism from Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University. His doctoral research focused on destination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

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 initiatives is the organization and development of the Mustafapaşa (Sinassos) Cultural Heritage Tour, a cultural journey that brings together the town's remarkable architectural, religious, and social heritage. Developed in collaboration with historians, local communities, heritage experts, 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 multicultural legacy of Mustafapaşa-Sinassos. Through its historic mansions, churches, monasteries, and living traditions, the route offers visitors a deeper understanding of the region's unique cultural identity and centuries-old coexistence of communities. .



Stop1 | Welcome & Introduction at Mehmet Şakir Paşa Madrasa

● Where the Journey into Sinasos Begins

The tour begins at the **Mehmet Şakir Paşa Madrasa**, one of the most prominent **Ottoman** landmarks in Mustafapaşa. From this point, visitors are introduced to the history of Sinasos and its rise as one of Cappadocia's most prosperous and culturally sophisticated settlements during the nineteenth century. The madrasa, built in 1899 by **Mehmet Şakir Paşa**, reflects the importance of education and public life in the late Ottoman period. Observing that the Turkish community in Mustafapaşa lagged behind the local Greek population in education, Mehmet Şakir Paşa commissioned its construction to promote equal educational opportunities. Today, the building continues to serve an educational purpose as part of **Cappadocia University**.



While viewing the building from the outside, guests can admire its monumental entrance portal, celebrated as one of the finest examples of stone craftsmanship in the region. Rich floral and geometric carvings, elegant architectural details, and the fusion of **Seljuk, Ottoman, Baroque, and Rococo** influences offer a first glimpse into the artistic and architectural richness that characterizes Mustafapaşa. This introduction provides the historical and cultural context for the sites that will be explored throughout the tour.

- Welcome and tour briefing.
- Introduction to Mustafapaşa (historic Sinasos) and its multicultural heritage.
- Overview of the town's transformation into one of Cappadocia's most prosperous commercial and cultural centers during the nineteenth century.
- Exterior interpretation of the Mehmet Şakir Paşa Madrasa (1899).
- Discussion of the building's historical functions and its continued educational role today as part of Cappadocia University.
- Examination of the monumental entrance portal and its distinctive stone craftsmanship.
- Introduction to the architectural, artistic, religious and social themes explored throughout the tour.
- Walking through the old quarters of Mustafapaşa
- Examination of traditional stone houses
- Greek inscriptions and urban heritage
- Daily life and social structure of nineteenth-century Sinasos



Stop2 | Historic Streets, Story Walk & Traditional Neighborhoods and Doors

- Every Street a Story, Every Door a Legacy



A walk through the historic streets of Mustafapaşa reveals the authentic character of former Sinasos, with its finely crafted stone houses, Greek inscriptions, and well-preserved urban fabric.

Through a guided Story Walk, visitors explore the shared heritage of Greek and Turkish communities, stories associated with the **Population Exchange**, and the architectural legacy of the town's merchant families. Along the way, guests discover **the craftsmanship** of Cappadocian stone masonry and the distinctive features of traditional mansions before enjoying a traditional coffee break.

One of the most remarkable features of the town is its **historic doors**, often described as **“gateways from the past to the future.”** Crafted from stone and wood, these doors preserve the **artistic traditions** and lifestyles of earlier generations. Mansion entrances are typically **double-leafed** and framed by **elegant arches**, often decorated with symbolic motifs such as **eagles, rosettes, and wheel-of-fortune** designs. In many cases, inscriptions above the doors record the names of their owners and the dates of construction, offering valuable insights into the town's social history.



Behind these historic doors, life continues much as it has for generations, preserving traditional ways and a strong sense of community. In this charming and mysterious town, visitors can follow the traces of Cappadocia's ancient cultural heritage while witnessing a vibrant living culture that remains an integral part of everyday life.

In Mustafapaşa, traditional dishes are still prepared in old-fashioned copper pots and large cauldrons, brought to life by the skilled hands of Anatolian women and enriching the local table. Here, one witnesses a deep and distinctive culinary heritage, where the food culture brought to the village through the population exchange blends with long-standing local traditions.



The streets of Mustafapaşa are more than pathways connecting buildings; they are living archives that preserve the memories of generations. Every doorway, stone carving, and neighborhood corner tells a story about the people who once called Sinasos home.

Stop3 | Historic Mansions of Sinasos

● Stone Mansions, Timeless Stories

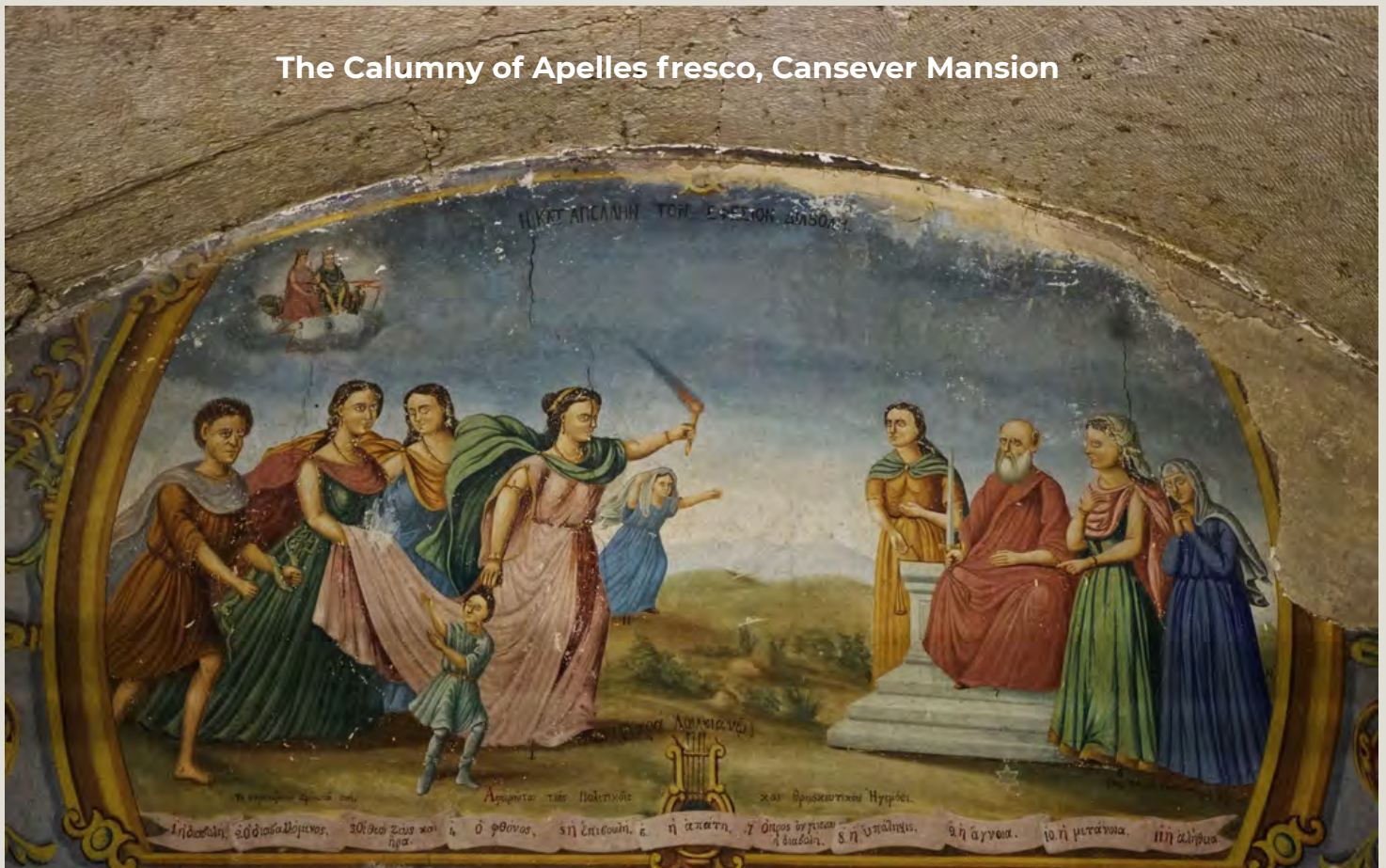


The Topakoğlu (Teperoğlu) Mansion and the Cansever Mansion (Zafira Faslaha House) are among the finest examples of the grand residences built by **Sinasos' prosperous merchant families** during the nineteenth century. These impressive mansions reflect the wealth generated through trade connections with Istanbul and demonstrate how economic success was transformed into architectural and artistic patronage.

In this stop, visitors can admire the exceptional stone craftsmanship, elegant façades, and decorative details that distinguish these residences from ordinary village houses. Beyond their **architectural** significance, the mansions offer insight into the **lifestyle, cultural aspirations, and international outlook** of Sinasos' elite families. The Cansever Mansion is particularly renowned for its remarkable **wall paintings**, including the famous **The Calumny of Apelles fresco**, which reveals the influence of European artistic traditions and highlights the intellectual character of the town.



The Calumny of Apelles fresco, Cansever Mansion



Topakoğlu (Teperoğlu) Mansion

One of the finest examples of nineteenth-century civil architecture in Sinasos, the **Topakoğlu Mansion** reflects the prosperity achieved by local merchant families through their commercial connections with Istanbul.

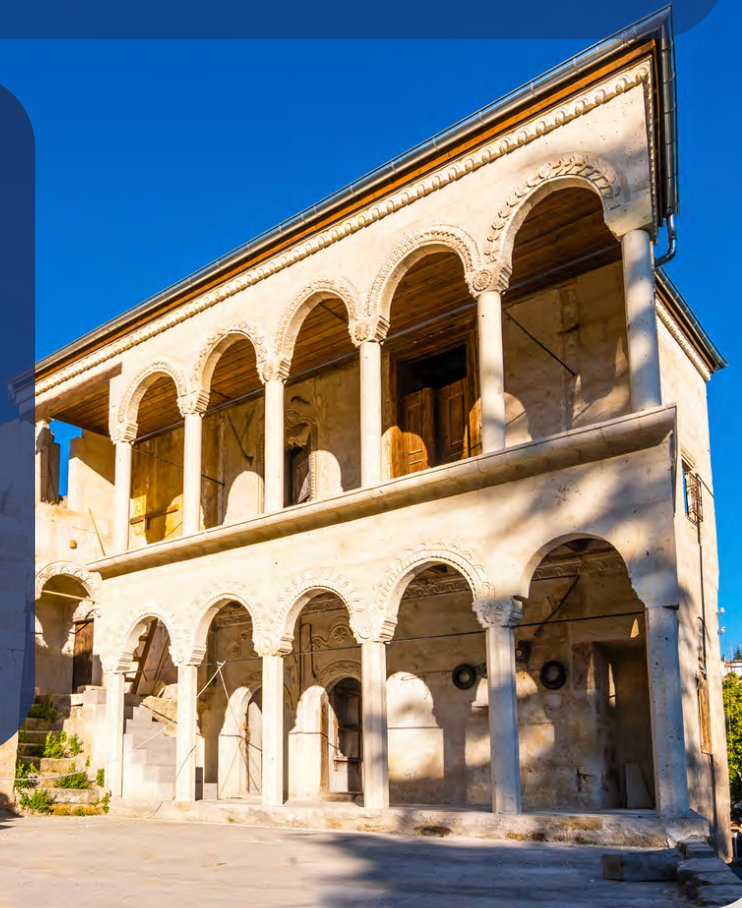
Beyond its impressive stone craftsmanship, the mansion is particularly notable for its interior wall paintings. These artworks depict idealized European cityscapes, elegant public squares, fashionable figures, and even one of the earliest representations of a steam train found in a Cappadocian residence. Such scenes reveal how the wealthy merchants of Sinasos viewed themselves not as inhabitants of a remote Anatolian town, but as participants in a wider world connected to **Istanbul, the Mediterranean, and Europe.**

One of the finest examples of nineteenth-century civil architecture in Sinasos, the **Topakoğlu Mansion** reflects the prosperity achieved by local merchant families through their commercial connections with Istanbul.

Multicultural Heritage

Mustafapaşa is renowned for its rich multicultural heritage, shaped by centuries of coexistence between different communities.

This unique cultural legacy continues to be researched and documented by **Cappadocia University**. Since the early 2000s, the annual Culture and Art Festival has brought together former residents, descendants, and visitors to celebrate shared traditions, local gastronomy, and cultural memories, helping to preserve and promote the village's diverse heritage for future generations.



**CAPPADOCIA
UNIVERSITY**
Logic - Wisdom - Equality - Tradition

Cappadocia University (KÜN) in Mustafapaşa village is Turkey's first and only higher education institution located in a central village. Founded in 2005 as a vocational school and upgraded to a university in 2017, its headquarters anchor the historic village



Spanning from Mustafapaşa's prosperous commercial past to the poignant memories of the 1923 Population Exchange, this journey is designed for those who wish to explore and understand Anatolia's multicultural heritage.

Ottoman Era Wall Paintings in Mustafapaşa

Beginning in the 18th century, increasing cultural interaction between the Ottoman Empire and Europe introduced new artistic trends in architecture and interior decoration. Alongside traditional geometric and floral motifs, wall paintings depicting landscapes, city views, palaces, ships, and architectural scenes became popular.

Mustafapaşa (historically known as Sinasos), one of Cappadocia's most prominent settlements, prospered during the 19th century through trade and commerce. Wealthy Muslim and Greek Orthodox families built impressive mansions, many of which were decorated with wall paintings inspired by artistic trends from Istanbul. As a result, scenes of the capital, waterfronts, palaces, ports, and Western-influenced architecture frequently appeared in the interiors of local houses.

Today, these wall paintings are valuable examples of late Ottoman decorative art, reflecting the cultural richness of Mustafapaşa, the influence of modernization, and the strong connections between the town and the wider Ottoman world.

Stop4 | Church of Saints Constantine & Helena

● A Sacred Legacy of Sinasos

The Church of **Saints Constantine and Helena** stands as one of the most important religious monuments in Mustafapaşa and a symbol of the town's prosperity during the nineteenth century. Originally built in 1729 and extensively rebuilt in 1850 with the support of wealthy Sinasos merchants living in Istanbul, the church reflects the strong **ties** between **the town** and the **Ottoman capital**.

Visitors can admire its impressive architecture, stone craftsmanship, and decorative details, including vine reliefs and the double-headed eagle motif. Beyond its architectural significance, the church offers insight into the religious life of **Ottoman Cappadocia** and demonstrates how successful merchant families invested in public and religious institutions, contributing to the social and cultural development of Sinasos.

- Architectural features of the church
- Religious life in Ottoman Cappadocia
- The role of merchant patronage in the town's development





The Church of Saints Constantine and Helena

The inscription reads:

“I am the church of the most sacred and devout rulers, Constantine and Helena, followers of the faith that once opposed paganism. I was partially built during the reign of Sultan Ahmed and appropriately adorned during the reign of Sultan Abdülmecid. During the archbishopric of the renowned Pasios, I was rebuilt from the foundations in 1729 through the efforts and expenditures of the Sinozites community. In 1850, I was restored.”

The Muslim Residents of Sinasos Before the Population Exchange and a Culture of Coexistence

Although the historical and cultural heritage of Mustafapaşa (Sinasos) is largely associated with its Greek Orthodox community, the Muslim population was an integral part of the town’s multicultural character and social fabric during the Ottoman period. By the late 19th century, approximately 4,500 Greek Orthodox residents and 600–1,000 Muslim Turks lived together in the town, developing a strong culture of coexistence.

Neighbourhoods and Settlement: Before the Population Exchange, Sinasos consisted of 12 neighbourhoods. Miskin, Dolamaçia, and Galesies were among the areas inhabited predominantly or entirely by Muslims.

- Miskin: According to Serafim Rizos, the neighbourhood contained around 100 Muslim households.
- Lulas: An important centre of Muslim religious and educational life, with a mosque and an Ottoman madrasa, associated with the structures that preceded today’s Mehmet Şakir Paşa Madrasa.
- Mezgit: A mixed neighbourhood where Greek and Turkish families lived side by side and shared much of their everyday life.
- Galesies (Kalaşa): Muslim residents maintained particularly close relations with their Greek neighbours, working together in vineyards and fields and forming strong social ties.

Occupations and Architectural Contributions: Muslim craftsmen played an important role in shaping the distinctive stone architecture of Sinasos. Rizos records that many Muslim men worked as builders, stonemasons, quarry workers, and labourers. Their craftsmanship contributed to the construction of the impressive mansions that still define the townscape today. A smaller number travelled to Istanbul, where they worked as *tablacı*, or palace attendants, at the court of Sultan Abdülhamid II.



Religious Tolerance and Shared Sacred Spaces: Relations between the communities extended beyond economic and social life into the spiritual sphere. Muslims and Greek Orthodox residents respected one another's religious celebrations and traditions. One of the most striking examples was the Monastery of Saint Nicholas, which was also regarded as sacred by local Muslims during the 19th century. Muslim residents seeking healing reportedly offered oil, wax, jewellery, or animals to the monastery and sometimes attended services, quietly observing the rituals and lighting candles.

The Population Exchange and Cultural Continuity: The 1923 Population Exchange brought this centuries-old coexistence to an end. While the Greek Orthodox inhabitants of Sinasos departed for Greece, Muslim refugees from Jerveni in the Kastoria region settled in the town. Moving into the homes left behind by the departing community, some of these families preserved the houses, wall paintings, and traces of their former inhabitants for decades, helping this multicultural heritage survive into the present day.

These historical accounts reveal that Sinasos was more than a town where separate communities simply lived alongside one another. Through shared neighbourhoods, crafts, agricultural life, traditions, and sacred spaces, its inhabitants formed a deeply interconnected social world.

Stop 5 | Monasteries Valley & St. Nicholas Monastery

● A Journey into Cappadocia's Monastic Past

A walk through the Monasteries Valley reveals one of the most important religious landscapes in Cappadocia. Surrounded by unique rock formations, the valley is home to a remarkable concentration of churches and monastic complexes that reflect centuries of spiritual life in the region.

The first monument encountered at the entrance of the valley is the **Church of St. Stephanos (Aziz Stefanos Kilisesi)**, notable for its liturgical features and religious significance. At the heart of the valley stands the **Monastery of St. Nicholas**, the most important complex in the area. During the 19th century, it functioned not only as a religious center but also as a social hub, featuring a rich library, a bakery, and even a silk-producing enterprise where silkworms were raised.



Approximately 50–60 meters south of St. Nicholas lies the Monastery Church of St. Prodomos, carved entirely into a massive conical rock formation. Directly opposite stands the Church of St. Barbara, while the hidden Church of St. John the Theologian (Aziz Ioannis Theologos / Yahya Kilisesi), located on a conical rock southeast of the monastery, completes the valley's mystical and sacred landscape.

As visitors explore the valley, they gain insight into the traditions of monasticism, the role of faith in daily life, and the cultural significance of this extraordinary religious center.

Key Sites & Points of Interest

- Walk through the Monasteries Valley
- Church of St. Stephanos at the valley entrance
- St. Nicholas Monastery and its historical functions
- Monastery Church of St. Prodomos
- Church of St. Barbara
- Church of St. John the Theologian
- History of monastic life in the region
- Cultural and spiritual significance of the valley

Stop6 | Mustafapaşa Geopark–Geology & Cultural Landscape



● A Journey into Cappadocia's Monastic Past

Located within [the Cappadocia UNESCO Global Geopark](#), this stop introduces visitors to the geological story behind Cappadocia's extraordinary landscape. The area surrounding Mustafapaşa provides excellent opportunities to observe colorful rock layers, volcanic deposits, and landforms shaped by millions of years of erosion.

In this stop, through the interpretation of different rock formations and geological features, visitors gain insight into the volcanic processes that created Cappadocia's unique terrain.

The varying colors visible in the rock strata reveal different geological periods and mineral compositions, helping to explain how nature shaped the valleys, settlements, and architectural traditions of the region.

This field experience highlights the close relationship between geology, landscape, and human history, offering a deeper understanding of how Cappadocia's natural environment influenced the development of local culture and daily life over centuries.



What is a Geopark?

Through the interpretation of different rock formations and geological features, visitors gain insight into the volcanic processes that created Cappadocia's unique terrain. The varying colors visible in the rock strata reveal different geological periods and mineral compositions, helping to explain how nature shaped the valleys, settlements, and architectural traditions of the region.

This field experience highlights the close relationship between geology, landscape, and human history, offering a deeper understanding of how Cappadocia's natural environment influenced the development of local culture and daily life over centuries.

The Monasteries Valley

Colourful Rocks, timeless Faith



Millions of years ago, volcanic activity laid the foundations of the Monasteries Valley. Layers of soft volcanic material, including the approximately **7.2-million-year-old Cemilköy Ignimbrite**, were gradually sculpted by water and erosion into steep slopes, cones and monumental rock formations.



Their relatively soft and workable structure later allowed people to carve directly into the rock. Churches, chapels and multi-level monastic spaces—including the monumental **St. Nicholas Monastery**—became part of the landscape itself.



Today, the Monasteries Valley reveals two histories in the same rocks: a **geological story** shaped over millions of years, and a **cultural landscape** created by centuries of human presence, faith and craftsmanship.



VOLCANIC
HERITAGE



ROCK-CUT
HERITAGE



FAITH &
SPIRITUALITY



HUMAN
CRAFTSMANSHIP

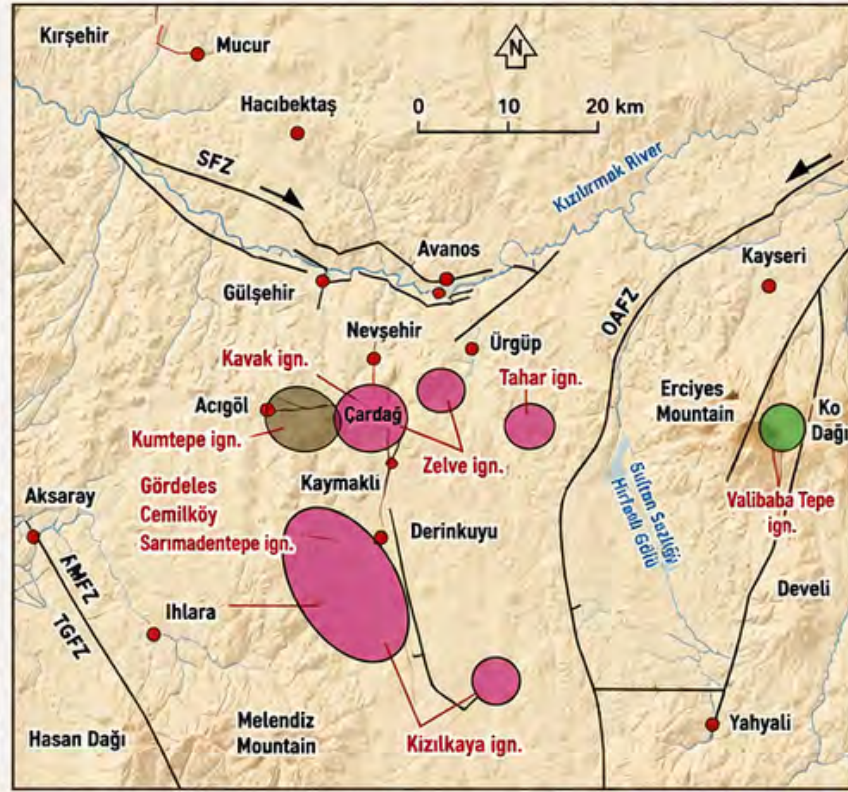


GEOLOGICAL STRUCTURE OF CAPPADOCIA



ERA / PERIOD	ROCK TYPE	DESCRIPTION	(Ar/Ar Ages, Ma) (U-Pb Zircon Ages, Ma)
PLEISTOCENE		Acigöl Rhyolites	
		Acigöl Basalts	
		Kumtepe Ignimbrite	
		Göllüdağ Rhyolites	
		Basalts	
PLIOCENE		Valibaba Tepe Ignimbrite	(2.52±0.49)
		Kışladağ Limestone	
		Kızılkağa Ignimbrite	(5.19±0.07) (5.11±0.37)
		Hodul Lavas	
UPPER MIOCENE		Gördeles Ignimbrite	(6.34±0.07) (6.33±0.23)
		Tahar Ignimbrite	(6.14±0.22) (6.07±0.67)
		Pumice Deposit	(6.76±0.30–6.96±0.28)
		Cemilköy Ignimbrite	(7.20±0.09) (6.66±0.40)
		Topuzdağ Lavas	
		Sofular	(8.17±0.08) (8.32±0.37)
		Sarımadedentepe Ignimbrite	(8.44±0.12) (8.96±0.51)
		Zelve Ignimbrite	(9.19±0.15) (9.13±0.40)
		Kavak Ignimbrite	(9.12±0.09–9.20±0.16) (9.13±0.51–10.08±0.5)
		Damsa Lavas	
CRETACEOUS		Erdaş Andesite	(9.10±0.16)
		Acigöl Granite	(78.44±0.79–77.8±4.4)

Rock units formed in the Nevşehir region during the last 80 million years and their generalized vertical stratigraphic sequence (Doğan, 2021).



The map shows the source areas of the ignimbrites distributed across the Cappadocia region (Doğan, 2021).



The Cappadocia region preserves evidence of the last 500 million years of Earth's history. Its oldest rocks are metamorphic rocks, including marble and schist, formed more than 365 million years ago. However, the formation of the Cappadocia landscape as we know it today is mainly the result of volcanic activity that began approximately 16 million years ago, with eruptions occurring at different times and displaying different characteristics.



The rocks widely exposed in the Cappadocia region consist mainly of volcanic ash deposits produced during different phases of volcanism—including the Kavak, Zelve, Cemilköy, Tahar and Kızılkağa ignimbrites—together with interbedded fluvial and lacustrine deposits. The erosion of these rocks by streams, floods and surface runoff has produced distinctive landforms such as fairy chimneys and badlands.



These widespread rock formations have shaped many aspects of life in the region, from the construction of underground cities to agricultural activities such as grape and potato cultivation, and have provided suitable conditions for the establishment and development of numerous civilizations. The region has been home to cultures and civilizations including the Assyrians, Hittites, Lydians, Phrygians, Persians, Romans, Byzantines, Seljuks and Ottomans.

● Ignimbrite Sources

— Fault Zones

~ Rivers

SFZ: Salt Lake Fault Zone

KFZ: Koşdağ Fault Zone

OAFZ: Orta Anadolu Fault Zone

TGFZ: Tuzgölü Fault Zone



Kavak and Zelve ignimbrites, in which fairy chimneys are widely developed around Akdağ, together with the overlying fluvial and lacustrine deposits (Doğan, 2021).

Stop7 | Beydere Valley – Nature, Faith & Local Legends

● Traces of Faith, Stories of the Valley

Located just north of Mustafapaşa, Beydere Valley combines striking natural scenery with important elements of the region's religious and cultural heritage. The valley's colorful rock formations and distinctive landscape provide visitors with an opportunity to observe the geological processes that shaped Cappadocia over millions of years.

One of the valley's most intriguing features is a naturally formed rock silhouette that many visitors associate with the profile of Jesus Christ. Visible from certain viewpoints, this formation has become one of the area's most recognizable landmarks and a source of local stories and interpretation.



On the eastern slope of the valley stands the Church of Saint Basil (Aziz Basilios), one of the most significant examples of Orthodox Christian heritage in Mustafapaşa. Dedicated to Saint Basil the Great, one of the most influential theologians of early Christianity and a native of Cappadocia, the church reflects the region's long-standing religious traditions and its importance within the Orthodox world.

Together, the valley's geological features, religious monuments, and local legends offer visitors a unique perspective on the relationship between nature, faith, and cultural history in Cappadocia.



"On the eastern slope of the valley stands the Church of Saint Basil (Aziz Basilios). While admiring its unique frescoes, visitors can also see a rock formation that reflects an image resembling a human face. According to local tradition, this formation is believed to be the reflection of the face of Jesus Christ on the rock."



Across Anatolia, distinctive elements of the natural landscape—such as rocks, mountains, springs, and trees—have often been associated with beliefs, sacred meanings, and local stories. These traditions reflect the ways in which communities interpreted and connected with their surroundings, sometimes transforming natural formations into symbols of faith, memory, and cultural identity. In this sense, the rock formation in Beydere Valley offers not a historical fact, but an example of how landscape and local belief can become intertwined through generations of storytelling.

Stop8 | Gomeda Valley – Hidden Heritage & Natural Landscape

● Walk Through Nature, Discover the Past

Often described as one of Cappadocia's quieter and less-traveled valleys, Gomeda Valley lies west of Mustafapaşa (Sinassos), where the Bey Stream winds through a landscape of lush vegetation and dramatic rock formations. Sometimes referred to locally as "Little Ihlara," the valley reveals traces of centuries of human life carved directly into the landscape. Along the route, visitors encounter rock-cut dwellings, historic churches, caves, tunnels, ancient water systems, and remarkable multi-level pigeon houses rising along the valley walls.



Among its most important religious sites are **the Alakara (Timios Stavros) Church** and the **Church of Saint Basil**, preserving evidence of the valley's long Christian heritage. Combining archaeology, faith, geology, and nature, Gomeda offers a peaceful walking experience and a different perspective on Cappadocia—away from its busier routes and deep within a landscape shaped by both nature and human history.



MUSTAFAPAŞA (SINASOS)

CULTURAL HERITAGE ROUTE

History • Architecture • Faith • Geology • Local Memory



DESTINATION

Mustafapaşa (Sinasos),
Cappadocia, Türkiye



TOUR TYPE

Full-Day Guided
Cultural Heritage & Walking Tour



EXPERIENCE

Historic Architecture • Churches & Monasteries
Geology • Valleys • Local Stories



GUIDE

Licensed Professional Tour Guide
(Multilingual Options Available)



TRANSPORT

Air-Conditioned Vehicle
+ Guided Walking Sections



GROUP TYPE

Regular Group /
Private Tour Options



DIFFICULTY LEVEL

MODERATE

Walking Required

This cultural route includes extended walking through historic streets and natural valleys. Some sections may involve uneven or rocky terrain, slopes, stone steps, and unpaved paths, particularly around the Monasteries and Beydere valleys.

Comfortable walking shoes are strongly recommended. Visitors should take extra care on uneven surfaces and during wet or slippery conditions.



COMFORTABLE
WALKING SHOES
RECOMMENDED



BRING
WATER



SUN
PROTECTION



CAMERA
RECOMMENDED



Discover the stories, landscapes and
cultural memory of historic Sinasos.



PLEASE NOTE

The route combines historic settlement areas with natural valley landscapes. Accessibility and walking conditions may vary depending on weather, terrain, and site conditions. Certain sections may not be suitable for visitors with limited mobility.

Experience Cappadocia



WHAT'S INCLUDED:



Licensed English-speaking guide



Hotel pick-up & drop-off



Entry fees & taxes



Air-conditioned luxury transport



Lunch at a local restaurant



NOT INCLUDED:



Tips for guide/driver



Beverages



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>

Kelebek Travel GÖREME

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Kelebek Group is committed to sustainable tourism that respects people, culture, and nature while creating lasting value for the region and its communities.

- SUPPORTING LOCAL PEOPLE AND ECONOMY**
We collaborate with women's cooperatives, women entrepreneurs, and local producers to strengthen local economies and preserve traditional products and cultural values.
- CULTURAL AND EXPERIENTIAL TOURISM**
Through cultural and experiential tourism, we enable our guests to connect directly with local life, traditional production practices, and cultural heritage, contributing to both economic and cultural sustainability.
- PRESERVING HERITAGE, INSPIRING THE FUTURE**
Cultural programs such as the Hittite Route increase awareness of excavation sites, promote regional cultural assets, and foster stronger connections between visitors and heritage. These initiatives also contribute to the recognition and encouragement of excavation teams working to uncover and preserve Anatolia's past.

RESPONSIBLE TOURISM
STRONGER TOGETHER
LASTING VALUE FOR THE REGION
RESPECTING NATURE AND CULTURE

Experience Cappadocia. Support the Future.

LOCAL IMPACT CULTURAL HERITAGE SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Together for Cappadocia



Tel: +90 (535) 458 5423



info@goremekelebektravel.com

For reservations, more information, or questions, please email us at info@goremekelebektravel.com (and include your full name) or you can call +90 535 458 5423.

