

The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia

Introduction

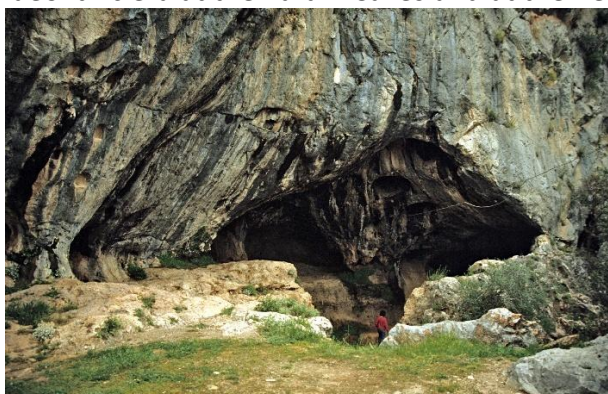
Turkey is a massive country and has a rich history dating back thousands of years. In fact, there is so much history and ancient culture it would take many very thick books to do justice to it all.

In this document I have focussed on the history of Lycia, which is an historical region dating back nearly Four Thousand Years, much older than the Roman, Greek and even the Persian Empires. I will cover the origins of the earliest people to inhabit the region, but most of what I will cover is from the 15th Century BC onwards and within the area of Lycia. This allows me to focus on the history, culture and ancient sites that are easily reached from Fethiye.



Map of Lycia Showing the Major Cities of the Region (Red dots are the major Mountain Peaks)

The Lukka people or inhabitants of Lycia were the first to be noted in ancient texts. They were mentioned in both Hittite and Egyptian texts. However, there is strong evidence of settlements dating back to the Palaeolithic era at the Karain Caves and at the Beldibi Cave just outside Antalya.



Cave Entrance

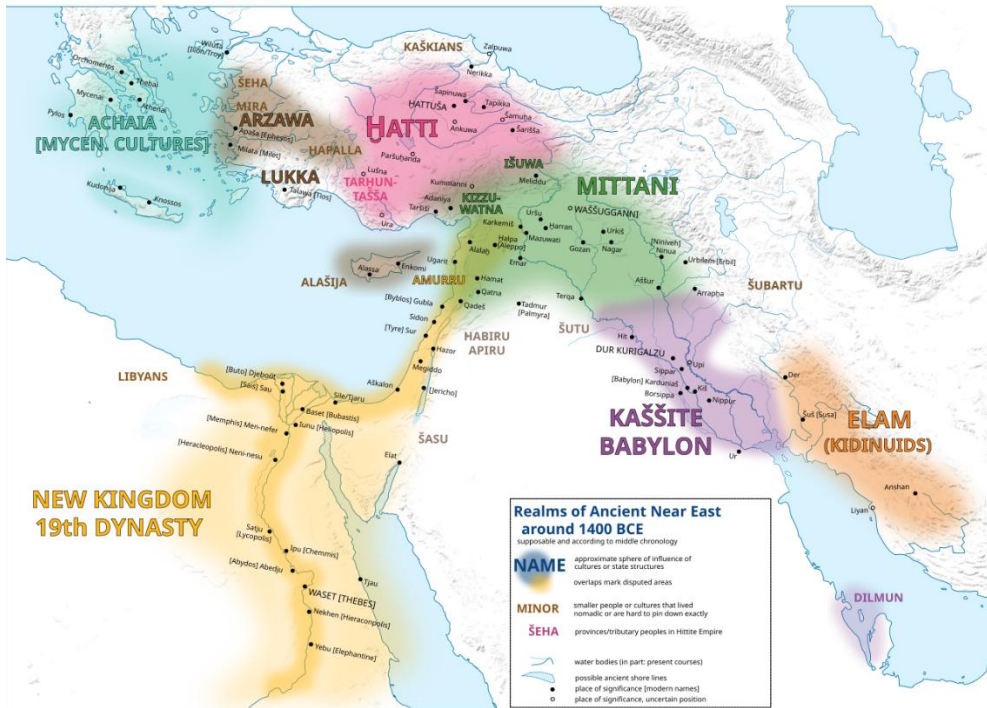
The broader region of Anatolia (mostly modern Turkey) was populated by peoples who spoke a mix of Luwian languages. They formed part of the expansion of developed agriculture which allowed for settlement rather than a nomadic (hunter gatherer) life. In Lycia these migrants found coastal planes and upland plateaus that were rich and fertile from the minerals washed down off the surrounding mountains. It is these fertile lands that has attracted all the great empires of the ancient world to the area.

Origins of the People of Lycia

According to [Herodotus](#), the earliest known inhabitants were a Bronze-Age people called the Milyans, who referred to the area as Milyas and spoke an Indo-European language known as Milyan. A people called

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the Termilae, from Crete, also settled and eventually dominated the coastal margins, which were known as *Trēm̄mis* (while the Milyans became concentrated in the mountains). According to Greek **legend**, an exiled Athenian called Lykos (Latin: *Lycus*) became prominent in the region. Records from the **Hittite** period refer to the inhabitants and the area as **Lukka**, and document lively interactions with neighbouring regions in the 2nd millennium BC. It is commonly accepted that Lukka is cognate with the later, Latinised word Lycia. The Lukka people were known for their seafaring skills (including piracy) and demonstrated a fiery, independent spirit; neither the Hittites, nor the Arzawa, to the west, could ever dominate them for long.



Civilisations surrounding the Lukka People in 1,400BC

So, what we have is an historical region that dates back to the times when Neanderthals and Homo Sapiens shared the land and a cave in the case of Karain. But what is there to see today? The following sections detail the location, history and remains of the main sites. At the end of the document are some suggested itineraries that will get you out and about across the region.

Lycia & The Lycian League

Before we look at individual sites it is perhaps useful to understand more about the Lycian people. As has been stated Lycians fiercely defended their lands and were very successful at protecting what was theirs. So, how were they able to achieve this? They were excellent seafarers and were able to control the waters along their coastline. They were excellent farmers and were able to grow large amounts of grain in the interior upland areas. They also exported other goods such as cedar, a strong timber used in construction, oils & Roses. They became very rich from this activity.

The individual sites were fiercely independent but fought together, often against much superior numbers. Cities were established with defence as a central objective. Over time however many of the major powers (Alexander the Great, Harpagus a Satran of the Persian Empire, Ptolomies of Egypt & several Roman Emperors) came and invaded or annexed part or all of the area. It is notable that despite these intruders, Lycians were able to maintain their culture and traditions. This may, in no small part, be due to their trading background which led them to prefer a deal to an ignominious defeat. As an example, when Alexander the Great approached the area, rather than try and fight an apparently undefeatable enemy, the Lycians rode out to meet him. He was presented with a gold crown in his honour and was housed in Phaselis during the coming winter. He then helped the Phaselisians to strengthen their defences against the Termessos (people of Termessos).

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The wealth of the Lycians came mostly from the grain and produce they were able to export and from the trading routes they controlled to the Eastern Mediterranean and Egypt. This is what “invaders” wanted from control of Lycia.

It is clear that whether any intruders came by force or annexation the Lycians were most often able to work with them as partners, particularly when they were able to work in unison rather than as individual ‘City States.’

The Lycians had a political system that allowed a great deal of independence for each city but with a higher ‘senate’ where each city had a number of votes which represented their relative importance. This political system was well established when it was described by Strabo based on inscriptions dating from the early part of 2nd Century BC. The league became more formalised between 168 BC and 43 AD when Lycia initially became a Roman protectorate and then a Roman Province attached to Pamphylia. The construction of the Bouleuterion in Patara is testament to the establishment of the 1st Parliamentary Democracy in history.

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List of Ancient Sites

The Capitals of Lycia

Xanthos - [LINK](#)

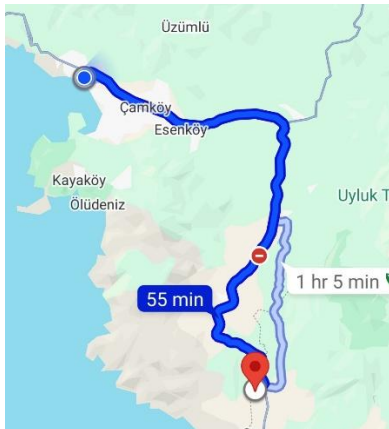
[Xanthos](#) was the initial capital of the Lycian League. It was recorded as early as the 6th Century BC and had a chequered storyline. It is famous for the spirited defence by the Xanthians, who on several occasions gathered their wives, children, possessions & slaves in a temple before burning everything to the ground. With nothing left to defend they then set off on suicidal attacks against their enemies.

They were conquered by the Persian General, Harpagus in 546 BC, then by Alexander the Great in 330 BC and finally by Brutus in 42 BC.

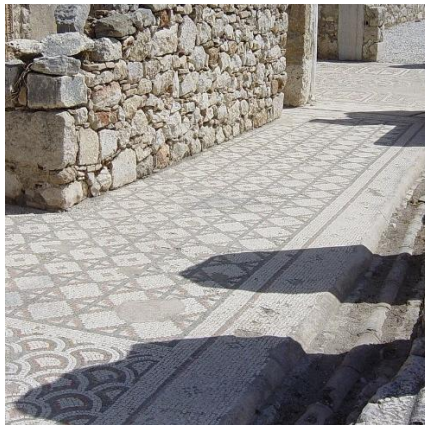
Xanthos and Lycia were at times in the Persian, Greek, Roman & Byzantine Empires as well as being part of the Ottoman Empire.

Several major artefacts, including Harpy's Tomb are on display in the British Museum. A replica of the tomb is on site at Xanthos, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

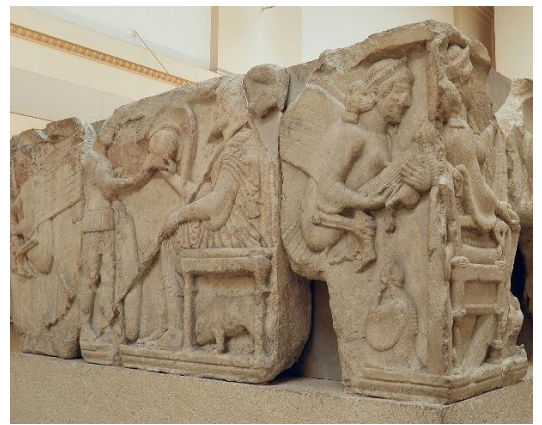
The site is easy to find and is well signposted from the D400 main coastal road. Approximately 55 minutes from Fethiye. The site is easy to access, well served with information boards and with plenty to see.



Directions (55 mins)



Mosaic Street



Harpy Tomb in British Museum



Theater

Patara - [LINK](#)

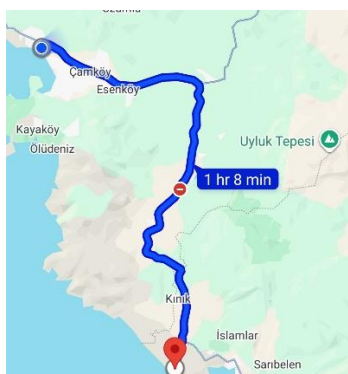
[Patara](#) was the second capital of the Lycian League and was the capital during flourishing times when Lycia was part of the Roman Empire. It was the largest port in Lycia and was significant enough for Emperor Hadrian to build a grain store alongside the harbour. This massive building is still visible today, but it does take a bit of a stroll to reach it.

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Patara was the capital at the height of political development in Lycia. The Lycian League had a two-tiered system of government, the heart of which was the Bouleuterion (Senate House) which is in a fine state of preservation today. The Bouleuterion was the home of the world's first parliamentary democracy. The Lycian Constitution was a major influence to the development of the American Constitution.

Alongside the Bouleuterion is a large amphitheatre. Both buildings are at the head of the colonnaded main street. From here you can explore the heart of the city and find temples and a number of roman baths.

The site is easy to find and is well signed from the D400 main coastal road. There is an information centre and plenty of signage around the site. You can also walk from the site to the 16km long sandy beach which is backed by huge 100m high sand dunes.



Lawrence of Arabia Dunes



Parliament Building



Colonnaded Main Street



16km Beach & Sand Dunes

The Aqueducts in Patara

In Roman times the city needed to get a supply of drinking water the nearest being in the hills, several kilometres away. With typical Roman determination several bridged aqueducts were built. But this left one valley that was too deep and too wide for a cost effective 'bridge aqueduct' solution.

The aqueduct, which was built under [Claudius](#) and renovated under Vespasian after an earthquake,^[25] was 22.5 km long. It comprised five bridges as well as a rare inverted siphon or pressurised pipeline which is still largely intact. The siphon avoided the construction of tall expensive arches across a valley to support an open channel but instead had the problem of containing the water pressure in the siphon in an era when large diameter piping was difficult to make and seal. The pipes were carved from stone blocks with internal diameter of 0.28 m, each weighing up to 900 kg, laid on top of a 200 m long, 10 m high wall across an 18 m deep valley. The blocks feature a flange and recess to connect to each other which may have been sealed with molten lead.

See the itineraries later in the document to get directions to find this fabulous piece of civil engineering.

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Siphon Aqueduct



Bridge Aqueduct in Patara Ancient City



Walking on top of the Siphon Aqueduct

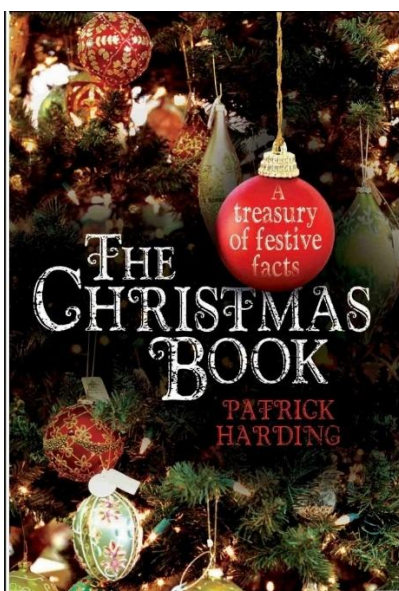
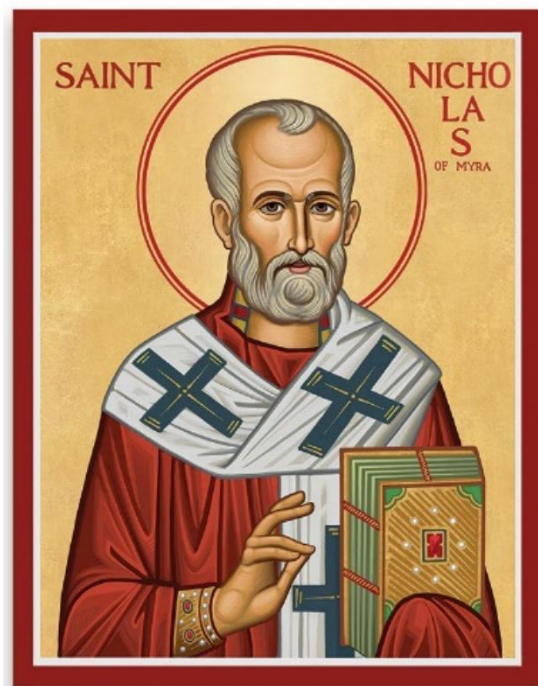
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All About Saint Nicholas?

Patara is the birthplace of Saint Nicholas, who became the Bishop of Myra in the 3rd Century AD, he was the second most important bishop in the Byzantine era. St. Nicholas is the source of many of the Christmas legends and also the patron saint of a wide variety of practices and professions, including the two oldest (Prostitutes and Thieves!) Two of his better-known Christmas contributions are the practice of hanging socks for our Xmas gifts (traditionally hung on the chimney) and (Saint)Santa (Ni)Claus carrying gifts in a large sack.

Legend has it that St. Nicholas saved 3 daughters of a very poor family from being sent out to prostitution by dropping gold coins down the chimney of their house the day before each daughter came of age. The 1st coins were caught in a sock that was drying by the fire.

St. Nicholas is also believed to have taken gifts round on New Year's Eve to poor families in Myra. The gifts were carried in a sack and left outside the doors of the family's houses.



Would you like to learn more about this complex, fascinating and truly legendary character? A friend of mine, Dr. Patrick Harding has written a very entertaining book on Santa Claus as well as the history stories behind some of our most enduring Christmas traditions. For example how did the rather stern chap pictured above become the rotund, cheerful chap in a Red costume that we find on our Xmas cards? What's the link between Santa's Sleigh and hallucinogenic mushrooms?

The book is available on Amazon & Kindle [LINK](#)

There is more about Saint Nicholas in the next section, Myra, which where he became a powerful bishop. Patara is a large city and the ruins are spread out over a wide area. You could spend a good half day exploring everything. The beach and dunes are stunning which makes Patara a great history & beach day destination. If the beach isn't your 'thing' then you could certainly combine a visit to Patara with a visit to Xanthos which you will pass on your way there or on your return. It is just a few minutes from Patara. You should also give yourself time (15mins drive and 30-40 minutes to exploration) to see the siphon Aqueduct. You will pass through Gelemiş, the village at the heart of Patara as you approach the ancient site. If you turn into the village, you will find a few shops and restaurants. If you carry on through the village and turn left at the top of the hill you will come to a parking area at the top of the sand dunes with great views over the beach.

Other sites you will pass and possibly visit on your way to and from Patara are Letoon, Pinara & Sidyma.

Myra - [LINK](#)

Myra was the 3rd and final capital of the Lycian League. It was, by ancient standards, a large city as evidenced by the size of the theatre. The theatre seated over 13,000 people and was lavishly decorated with sculptures

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and carvings and outlandish colouring. It is situated at the heart of the city at the Southern base of the acropolis hill. Next to the theatre is a collection of some of the best and most ornate rock tombs in Lycia.

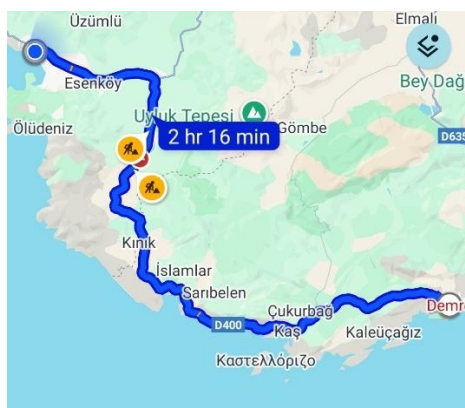
Myra is in the modern-day town of Demre and spreads from the area around the theatre all the way to the harbour at Andriake, which is still in use today. Beside the old harbour are the remains of a grain store, built by Emperor Hadrian. The store allowed large convoys of grain to be brought down to the coast from the upland plains under the protection of the military. Unfortunately, the majority of the ancient city is buried and only a few buildings can be seen sticking out of the ground.

Myra is also home to the Church of Saint Nicholas, which is well preserved and has been excavated in recent years.

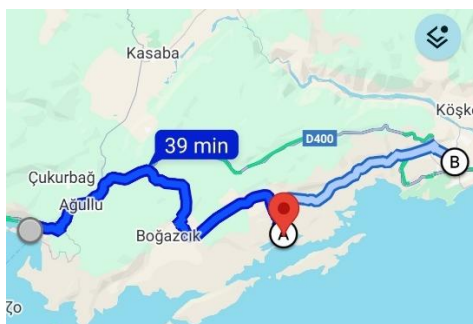
There are four sites that are worth visiting in Demre (Myra) the first is the Theatre & Rock Tombs which on a single site. The second is the Siant Nicholas Church (Baba Noel) which is in the centre of Demre. The third is the harbour at Andriake which is where you will find Hadrian’s Grain store, which is now restored and houses a museum. There is also a replica boat in the old harbour. The fourth site is near the old harbour and is accessible from the D400 as you approach down hill to Demre. Here you will find the sulphur springs and swimming pools that are restored and usable today.

It takes just over 2 hours to drive from Fethiye to Demre and you will need quite a bit of time to explore everything. However, I would recommend extending your trip to include a stop in the charming village of Üçağız (3 mouths) better known as Kekova, which is home to the sunken city. A diversion to Üçağız adds 23 minutes to your journey time, but the scenery and views over the Kekova Lagoon are well worth the extra time as is a stop harbourside for a coffee or a snack. There is more about Üçağız in the itinerary sections.

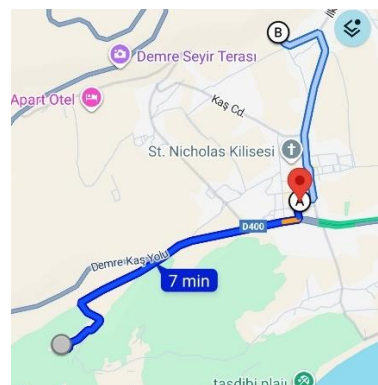
If you take the diversion to Kekova when you turn right back onto the D400 look out for the small hilltop temple to your right. Take a stroll up to the temple to see the main building some tombs and a couple of lengthy Lycian inscriptions. A short stop, but well worth the effort.



2hrs 16 mins to Demre



Short Diversion to Üçağız / Kekova
an extra 23mins



From Andriake to Myra via
Bab Noel Church 13mins

There is so much to see in and around Myra / Demre and to do it justice you will need to plan a full day as a minimum. The pictures below will give you an idea on how much is waiting for you at this destination. I have suggested a 2 day itinerary in the relevant section.

Andriake – the Old Harbour and the New One in use today.

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Grain Store Before Restoration



Grain Store Today



Sulphur Springs in Andriake opposite Hadrian's Grain Store. Very popular in summer with the locals!

Saint Nicholas Church – was buried for many years so the Frescoes are in great condition



Myra – Theatre



Myra – Theatre Decoration

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Theatrical Masks from the Theatre
Myra – Rock Tombs Beside the Theatre



Decoration that ran across the theatre walls



Tombs with Doors & Windows
Homes for the Ancestors



Carvings Decorate the Tombs

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Extending your trip to Myra

Myra, Saint Nicholas Church, Andriake, Hadrian's Grain Store Museum and the Sulphur pools combined with a diversion to Üçağız (Kekova) on the way there or back is a full day of activity with nearly 5 hours of driving. If you want to stay another day, I'd suggest considering a stay in a B&B in Üçağız and taking in a boat trip over the sunken city and time to explore the hilltop castle at Simena.

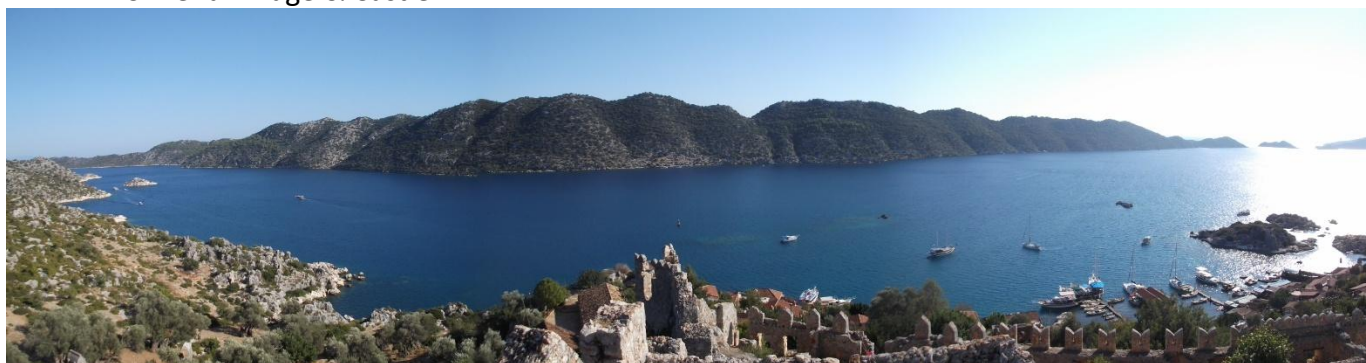
Simena & Kekova Lagoon



Simena Village & Castle



Exploring Simena



View from the Hilltop Castle at Simena – Overlooking Kekova Lagoon, Kekova Island & the Sunken City

The Ports & Harbours of Lycia

The most important ports of Lycia were Patara, Myra (Andriake), Olympos & Phaselis. The Lycians were seafaring traders and sometimes pirates. So, these port cities had an added importance. Patara and Myra have been covered in the previous (Capitals of Lycia) section.

A Sunken City a Harbour, A Hilltop Castle and A Military Fort

Üçağız is the harbour from which many boats depart to offer a trip over the Sunken City of Kekova. Kekova was destroyed and flooded by a massive earthquake in 144AD. The boat trips take you along the coastline of Kekova Island and across the Kekova Lagoon from Üçağız. On the Island you will see the remains of the city and some of its unique architecture; there are huge buildings cut on three sides into the bare rock. This allowed the city to be built on terraces up the steep slope of the island. The area is generally known as Kekova as it became famous due to the sunken city of that name, which was a major port until it was destroyed.

A visit to Üçağız / Kekova is certainly more than a boat trip. The village is built on, in amongst and on top of some very old Lycian remains. It is a very traditional village with narrow streets meandering past colourful boho chic boutiques, bric-a-brac & souvenir shops.

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Next to Üçağız is the hilltop castle and fishing village of Simena, once part of the fortifications for Kekova. You can walk or drive to the rear of the castle and take a short sharp wander up to the ruins. However, if you are doing a boat trip, it will often stop at Simena for time to explore and a lunch/snack stop.

Üçağız means three mouths and refers to the lagoon formed by Kekova Island (Kekova Adası). There are three entry points to the lagoon and from the lagoon the entrance to Üçağız Harbour is protected by two headlands, making it a very safe harbour. Today it is a very popular marina and stop-off for sailing yachts.



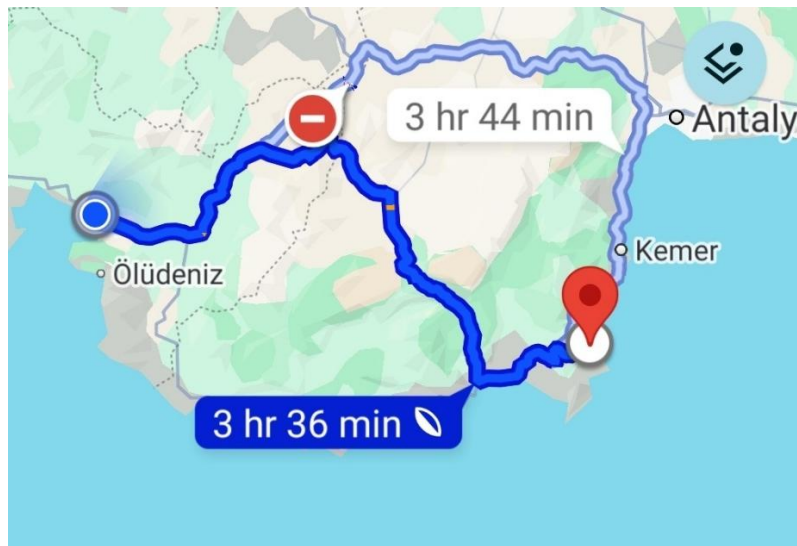
Kekova Island & Lagoon



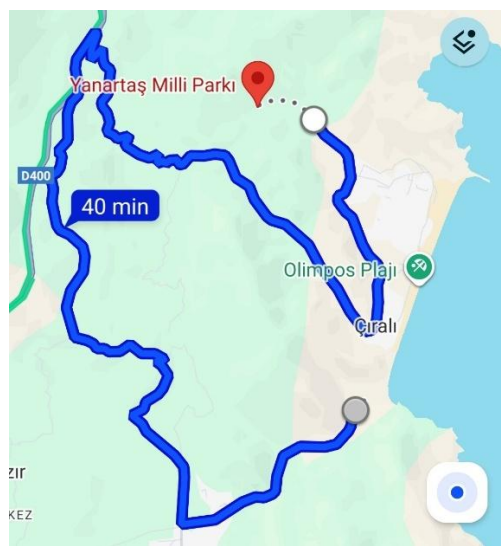
Sunken building beside Kekova Island

There are two walks on the Lycian Way that will end in Üçağız. Both walks are treks rather than strolls but are relatively short 10-12km and shouldn't be a problem for regular walkers used to walking on rough ground. Two itineraries are included in the later section. Each of these walks pass by additional Lycian sites. One is Aperlai which is west of Üçağız, a small harbour & military fort, the other, to the east, is Istlada where there are a few large stand-alone tombs and a temple.

Olympos & Eternal Flames of Chimera - [LINK](#)



Directions to Olympos



From Olympos to The Eternal Flames

Olympos is situated in a bay a short boat ride from Adrasan, my previous home of some 18 years. It's a place that I used to run tours around that lasted up to 2 hours. It has always had a long and deep history our knowledge of which has grown in the last 12 years. Some important texts were discovered relating to the bishop of Olympos. From these it became clear that Olympos was a much more important city than had previously been thought. As a result, a number of excavations were conducted and the results were extraordinary. Those of us who knew Olympos well beforehand knew it was special but we weren't how or why.

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There is a lot to see in Olympos itself but to gain a full appreciation of the site you should also plan to visit the nearby 'Eternal Flames' of Chimera, a phenomenon mentioned in Homer's Iliad.

There is a lot to see in Olympos and it is in a very compact area, although some of the pathways are still quite rough in places.

When I first went to Olympos around 1995 it was an adventure to get around the site, it was very overgrown in most places away from the main street. At that time, we were aware of a necropolis on the far side of the river, some arches and the base of a large bridge in the river. There was also a small church and a small mosaiced building, thought to be a bishop's house. There was a huge temple gate which was Lycian in design but had been embellished with Roman decorations. However, there was a particular tomb that was extensively decorated and rumours of an inscription to Marcus Aurelius. These were signs that there was some importance to this place.

Some of the remains that we found in 1995



Tomb of Captain Eudemos

Poem from the Tomb of Capt. Eudemos

*The ship sailed into the last harbour and anchored to
leave no more,
As there was no longer any hope from the wind or
daylight,
After the light carried by the dawn had left Captain
Eudemos,
There buried the ship with a life as short as a day,
like a broken wave.*



Temple Gate



Tomb of Alkestris – A Philosopher!

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Even in the early days there were some clues to the grandeur that was hidden in the unexcavated areas of the city. The Temple Gate is huge and you could see from the remains behind that it had been a large and magnificent. The decoration of the tombs shown above is of top quality. Alkestris' tomb is made of limestone and is in the shape of a house and is located right in heart of the city. These are all classic signs of Lycian Tomb and the writing is Lycian. The decoration, although quite weathered is of the highest quality found normally on Roman Tombs. It can be concluded that this is a tomb of a very wealthy and well-respected citizen. In a port you would expect this to be a ship owner, trader, military commander or dignitary. In fact Alkestris was a philosopher.

In subsequent years a number of excavations have taken place and opened up a whole new realm of buildings and history. Despite this Olympos retains the very calm and spiritual feel that it had in the earlier days. Given the history that has been discovered this may not be all that surprising!

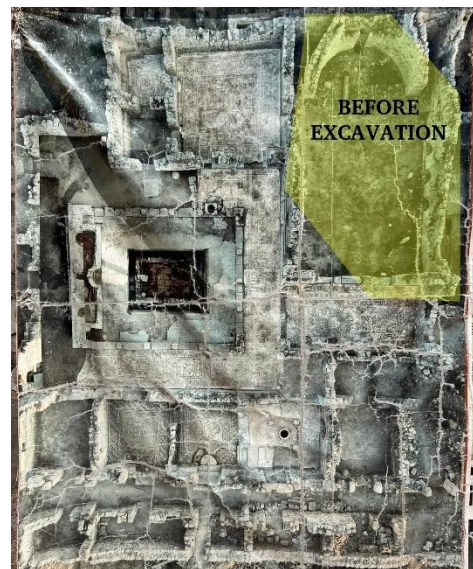
Probably the major discovery was that the small church we had seen on our early visits was in fact a small side chamber in a bishop's Palace, a large baptismal church was found opposite the palace. In fact in total 9 churches have been uncovered, some having early origins but many having later been fashioned in the Byzantine style.

When I first explored Olympos I read the Lonely Planet Guide which said "Walk straight through to the beach there's nothing to see in the ruins." This was certainly untrue at that time but is totally wrong these days.

The effect of the excavations



Baptismal Church Opposite Bishop's Palace



Bishops Palace

From the pictures above you can see the extent of these two significant buildings that have been uncovered.



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Excavated a street through Warehouses & Villas



Mosaics in the Palace

A huge area of the site has been uncovered revealing a full commercial district to explore. The site has god signs all over and you can explore both sides of the river to find Alkestris Tomb & a Huge Roman Baths dedicated to Emperor Vespasian.

The report on the excavations concludes that Olympos evolved through the Roman period and on into the Byzantine era, during which there had been a major amount of construction during a very productive period 5th & 6th centuries AD. The presence of the Bishop's Palace and development of other churches indicate that this was a significant place in the Mediterranean evolution of Christianity. This overturns the previous theories that proposed that Olympos had faded away towards the end of the Roman period.

Olympos had many famous visitors, some more welcome than others, these include General Harpagus at the head of the Persian Army, Marcus Aurelius, Emperor Vespasian, Julius Cesar & Hadrian. Whist Olympos was an important port it seems this level of interest indicates something else of interest. Before the times of the Bishop's Palace and the Baptismal Church these dignitaries came and stayed for a considerable amount of time.

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It is believed that the additional interest relates to the mythical fire breathing Chimera that was slain by [Bellerophon](#) and buried in the foothills of Mt. Olympos (Tahtalı Dağ) after which the city was named. The eternal flames of Chimera are in the hills above the neighbouring modern-day village of Çirali.



Bellerophon Attacks Riding the Winged Horse Pegasus



Inscriptions on a Temple Plinth



Early Byzantine Church Paintings



Roasting Marshmallows



View Over Flames to the Bay of Çirali

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Visiting the Eternal Flames - [LINK](#)

I would recommend going to the site of the flames just over an hour before sunset. The walk from the car park and entrance is on quite a steep slope over rough cut steps. The walk is about 1km and takes about 30-40 minutes. In this way you will be able to see some inscriptions on plinths built around the flames and the remains of an early byzantine church. In the church you will find some early byzantine symbolic painting.

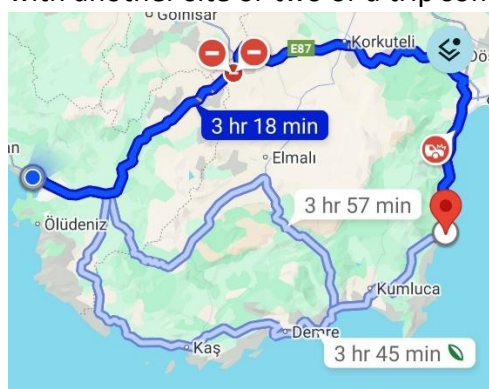
Now it's time to select a group of flames from about 20 different sets of flames. Here you can watch as the flames seem to grow as darkness falls. Take in the atmosphere and try to imagine what those visiting dignitaries would have made of this site! Take some marshmallows and roast them over the flames.

You will need sturdy footwear and a torch for the walk back down. There are more details and suggestions in the itinerary section as clearly Olympos is not really suitable for a day trip.

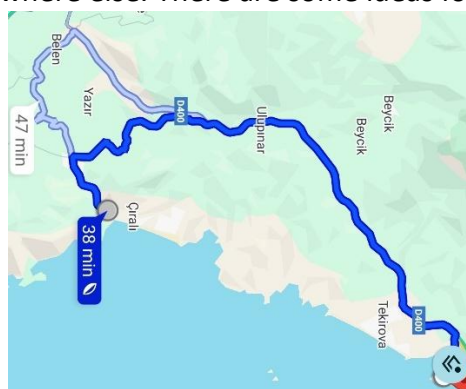
Phaselis - [LINK](#)

A short drive along the coast from Olympos & Çıralı is the Lycian harbour town of Phaselis. Established in 7th century BC by Rhodians (people from Rhodes) it had a troublesome history until it became part of the Lycian League in 160BC.

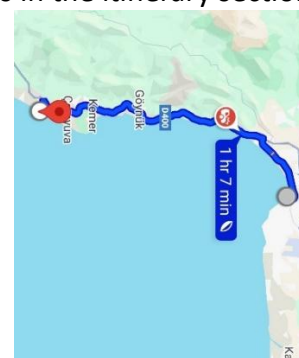
Phaselis is a 3-4hr drive depending on the route you take, so it is likely you will combine a visit to Phaselis with another site or two or a trip somewhere else. There are some ideas for this in the itinerary section.



Fethiye to Phaselis



Olympos to Phaselis



Antalya Old Town to Phaselis

Despite the turbulent times between the 7th & 2nd centuries BC Phaselis was the most important port in the East of Lycia. This is because of its excellent natural harbours, strong defensive position and its ability to trade across the mediterranean, where it was a commercial hub for trade with Greece, Asia Egypt and Phoenicia.



Here are some extracts from the information board at Phaselis

Phaselis existed in very turbulent times and was subjected to many rulers. It was under Persian Rule in the 5th Century BC then came under Carian (Present day Bodrum area) control in the 4th Century BC. Later it was under the authority of King Pericle of their neighbour city Limyra (near Finike). The Phaselitans, however, were

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more concerned with trading than politics and seemed to prosper no matter who controlled them. For example, as Alexander the Great marched toward the city in 333BC, the Phaselitans decided to not resist the advancing army and met Alexander outside the city where they presented him with a golden crown. He remained in Phaselis for a time and after Alexander’s death the city came under the domination of many kings.

In the 2nd Century BC, the city belonged to the Lycian federation. It minted typical coins of the federation and accepted its government. But finally, it was formally incorporated into the Roman Empire in 43BC. During Roman rule, the city enjoyed an extended period of peace and prosperity and went through an extensive rebuilding period that continued for 300 years.

In 129AD the roman Emperor Hadrian visited the city causing an impressive monumental arch, new monuments and statues to be constructed in commemoration of his visit.

The city exported many products but was most famous for Timber (Cedar), Liliun Oil & Roses. Phaselitans were essentially traders, and earned their living by sailing the sea routes of the Mediterranean and Aegean seas. However, history tells us their reputation in conducting business was very unsavoury. They were infamous for their shrewdness and getting the better of their trading partners. Another interesting note was that Phaselitan women assumed an interesting hair style called ‘sisoe.’ resembling similar to the Egyptian goddess, Isis. Phaselis may not have always been a pleasant place to live, according to historians of the period, Phaselitans suffered intermittent plagues of wasps and malaria, for which they blamed foreign sailors docking their ships in the harbours.

A fascinating insight into life in ancient times and the turbulence of competition between the major empires of the mediterranean. Much of driven by the desire to secure the produce and products of Lycia as well as the trading skills and capabilities of the Lukka people and their descendants.



Main Steet leads to Hadrian’s Gate



Detail from Hadrian’s Gate



Lion Detail a Symbol of Hadrian



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Mosaics in Baths Complex



Bath Complex - Explore it to find parts of the marble lined walls

Mosaics in Baths Complex

Phaselis is a very compact site with good information signs. The third harbour area beyond Hadrian's Gate is a good place for a swim and is a popular spot for a picnic. There are a number of churches, shops, agora, a town square, a large baths complex with mosaic floors and a medium sized theatre with views to Mt. Olympos (Tahtalı Dağ) in the distance.

It is an interesting place to explore and have a swim stop and or a picnic.

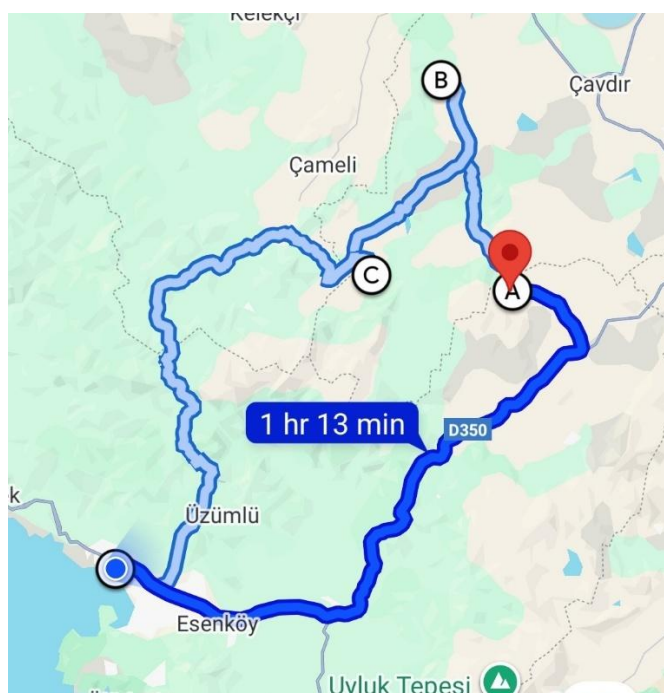
The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia

Important Inland Cities

Inland from the coast there are some major cities which are tribute to the wealth generated from agriculture in the high pastures. Some of these cities as with the extreme Western and Eastern coastal cities were on the borders of the Lycian Federation. However, trade was often more important than political affiliations. Some like Kibyra formed their own “Federations” or alliances and drifted in and out of the Lycian Federation as was beneficial to both groups. Other like Termessos were never part of the Lycian Federation or League. Here we can find some of the grandest cities that reflected their commercial importance.

Kibyra, Balboursa & Boubon - [LINK](#)

Kibyra is situated just outside the modern town of Gölhisar. It is a city of some great historical importance and the site includes some very significant buildings, the scale & decoration of which is of the highest quality. It's a 1hr 40min drive to Kibyra so I would suggest you take the opportunity to visit Balboursa on the way there and then take a different route home stopping to search for Boubon. In the map below A=Balboursa, B=Kibyra, C=Boubon.



Balboursa is tricky to find but it is in a stunning setting either side of a river. See itinerary for more details. We found some nice very decorative tombs, remains of a roman temple and some Hellenistic city walls, we didn't find either of the theatres as we were short of time.

Kibyra is simply magnificent and it's worth the trip just to visit there.

Boubon seems to have been quite an important site with some high-quality items being kept in Burdur museum. It is a short diversion from the main route home into Ibecik village. It is up a steep climb onto D??? Tepe (a hill) which is not for the faint hearted. There are no signs to help you find the site. Good luck! We gave it a miss but Ibecik is a very traditional village, true agricultural Turkey. Expect to be stared at.



Kibyra or Cibyra was also referred to as Cibyra Magna, was an Ancient Greek city near the modern town of Gölhisar, in Burdur Province. It lay outside the north-western limits of the ancient province of Lycia and was the chief city of an independent state known as Cibyratis. Since 2016 it has been included in the Tentative list of World Heritage Sites in Turkey.

The city grew to be powerful in the 2nd century BC. Kibyra was famous for its blacksmithing, leather processing and horse breeding, pottery production was also very intense in the area. At this time it joined with three neighbouring Lycian towns, [Bubon](#), [Balboursa](#), and [Oenoanda](#), to form a confederation called the Tetrapolis. Within this confederation, the other three cities had one vote, but Cibyra had two votes, since it could muster 30,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry.

Today Kibyra is a well laid out and maintained site. There are two car parks, one lower close to the stadium the second is higher up by the empirical baths, theatre and Odeon. This means access to all the significant items are easily accessible. You can however take a circular walk around the site on well made and maintained paths. A map showing paths to all major items is beside the stadium.

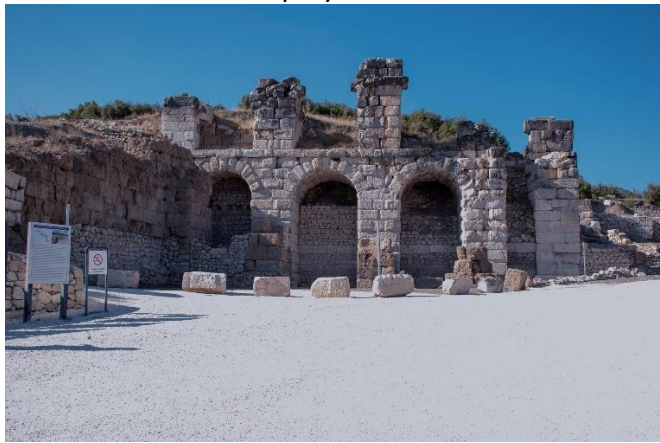
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Workshop by the Stadium



Detail from the Workshop



Emperor's Baths



25,000 Seater Theatre



Odeon Facade



Odeon Forecourt Mosaics



Mosaics inside the Odeon featuring Medusa's Head as a Central Feature

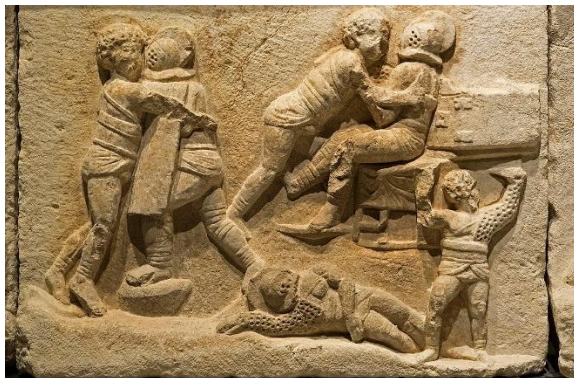
The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia



The Stadium Measures 650ft (198m) x 80ft (24m) and was a site for Gladiatorial Contests

Statue of a famous Kibyra Gladiator Hyacinthos at the entrance to the site.

He was named after **Hyacinthus**, in Greek [legend](#), a young man of Amyclae in Laconia. According to the usual version, his great beauty attracted the love of [Apollo](#), who killed him accidentally while teaching him to throw the discus; others related that Zephyrus (or Boreas) out of jealousy deflected the discus so that it hit Hyacinthus on the head and killed him. Out of his blood there grew the flower called *hyacinthos* (perhaps a fritillary; not the modern hyacinth), the petals of which were marked with the mournful exclamation AI, AI (“Alas”). The flower was also said to have sprung from the blood of Ajax, the son of Telamon.



Gladiatorial Fresco in Burdur Museum

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Nymphaeum (Fountain)

An extract from Kibyra’s UNESCO World Heritage Site Listing

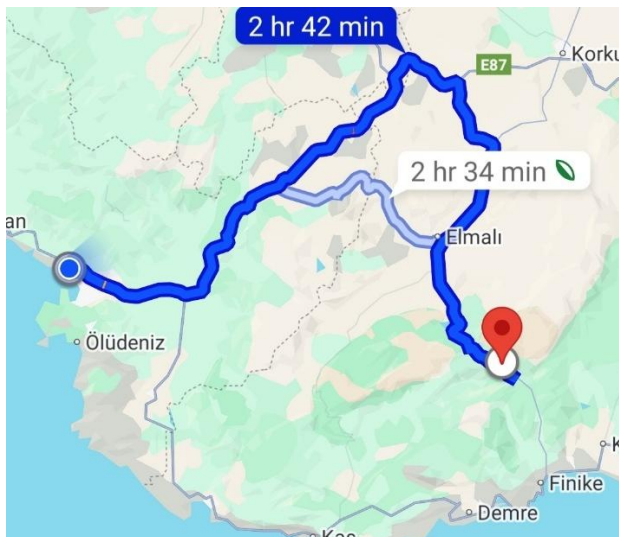
Kibyra exemplifies a successfully Romanized provincial power, with a strong army, municipal facilities, well-established administrative and judicial institutions, flourishing industries and Roman-taste entertainment like gladiator fights. The constructors were challenged by uneven terrain of the city, who managed to provide a good view of the surrounding territory for each building, resulting in a sense of monumentality at the same time. The regularity in urban plan, the glory in monumental architecture and technical uniqueness of artwork in the structures reaches to a highly regarded unity within the city, which today releases valuable information about urban development phases and land use pattern and traditions since antiquity as well as the sense of art of the time.

See the Itinerary section for details of other places to visit with Kibyra (Sagalassos & Burdur Museum)

Arykanda - [LINK](#)

Arykanda is one of my favourite sites in all of Lycia. Partly because of the quality and extent of the remains to be seen and because it is an extensive site which is ideal to explore. There is a magnificent surprise at around every corner. Perhaps more importantly you can see and feel the opulence of this city where coastal traders, merchants and sea captains came to do business with the inland farmers and producers of a wide range of goods. This is a place where deals were done and celebrated in some style.

Arykanda is situated between the D350 inland highway to Antalya and the coastal D400. As it is somewhat removed from the main tourist routes it is often almost deserted. It sits on the side of a steep hill with fabulous views across the valley. In ancient times this was a major thoroughfare between the highland pastures and the coastal ports.



There are 2 Routes the Longer One is on Better Roads



Waterfall & Market

As you approach the site you will see a small market on the left. Here you can buy fresh fruit and cooked sweetcorn. The water from the waterfall to the back is refreshingly cold & safe to drink. Ideal to pack up a picnic to enjoy on the site.

Access to the site is on a steep road that starts at the side of the market. There is parking in the site at the top of the road. From here you will get your first view of the heart of the city. There is an information board on the main street by the mausoleums and tombs on a street overlooking the city baths.

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If you head uphill on steps to the left of the information board you will come to the agora, a small Odeon and can continue up the steps to the main theatre.



Mosaics in Houses near the Main Street



Part of the Baths & Gymnasium Complex



Mausoleum with Decorative Tomb



Main Theatre



Stadium with Shelves for Trophies

Arykanda is an extensive site and there are some signs to help you locate specific buildings. If you want to explore it fully try this meandering route.

- From the Car Park head toward some canopied buildings which house the mosaics
- Head to the lower level & explore the baths and gymnasium complex

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- Head up to the main street heading to the right from the information board and take in the mausoleums, and monumental tombs
- Head back past the Information board and take the steps to the left which will take you up to an opening to the state Agora (Market) from the “stage” there is a doorway to the Odeon
- Come back out and head further up the steps to find the main theatre and go inside. Note the tree growing out of the rows of seats to you left.
- Takes the steps between to seating rows to the top of the theatre. Here a dirt track heads straight on and leads to a major water cistern, the commercial Agora, some shops and houses and a temple of Helios, Greek God of the sun.
- Head back to the top of the theatre and follow the dirt track round to the left. This leads you to the Stadium. Exit the Stadium at the far side and follow a track that winds back to the steps beside the theatre.
- At the bottom of the steps head to the right to see some other minor buildings (including Roman toilets) before heading back to the car park.

The state Agora, the Theatre or The Commercial Agora are great places to have a picnic with stunning views across the valley and the mountains beyond.

When you are on the “stage” within the state Agora try to imagine the city priests presenting their wonders to the general population below. It is written that the people of Arykanda had an artefact that had come from the sun (hence the temple of Helios!) Imagine the priests revealing some bright sparkling object in the bright sunlight, a genuine piece of the sun itself!!

Late Bronze

Arykanda is known to be one of the old Lycian cities, as its name ends with -anda, indicative of its Anatolian origin; dating as far back as the 2nd millennium BC.

Iron Age

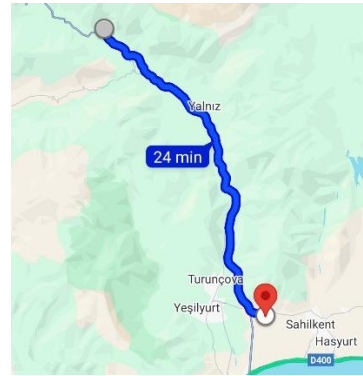
The oldest remains and finds from the city date from the 6th or 5th century BC. Archaeological evidence suggests it became a town in the third century BC, when it gained typically Greek monuments including an agora, bouleuterion, a small stadium, temples and eventually a beautiful theatre.

I would allow 2 hours to explore the city including time for a picnic.

The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia

Limyra - [LINK](#)

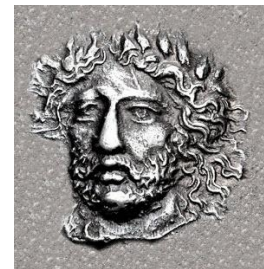
A short 24-minute drive from Arykanda is a small but fascinating site with a very long history and a few remarkable relics, recent research has reshaped the understanding of Limyra and its role in the region. Limyra was always identified as a magnificent & influential city, but recent excavations have added significantly to that story.



Pictured far Left we can see a reconstructive image of a library, note the “crown” that sits atop the roof. To the right are the remains of the “crown” that topped the roof. This stands at about 2m high, giving an idea of the scale of the original building.



Pictured Left is a reconstructive image of The Heroon of Pericles. A classic monumental tomb with an image of Pericles going to war on the right side.



A Coin of Pericles



Little of this structure remains on site but the War of Pericles Frieze is held in Antalya Museum.

The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia



Theatre & Rock Tombs



Flooded Main Street with Paving Slabs & Columns



Detailed Carving of a Wagon Wheel

Limyra is in a beautiful setting with a small river running through it and over the colonnaded Main Street. Part of the Herron and an adjacent Church are also under a shallow flood from the stream. You can sit on stone blocks in the Church and refresh your feet in the waters, you can even wade down the main street. It's different!



Pull Up a Pew



Flooded Church



Wading Up Main Street

Limyra is certainly worthy of a visit and recent excavations have uncovered a 2,400 Temple of Zeus adding to the history of the city. [LINK](#) for more information on this project.

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Tlos - [LINK](#)

Tlos is thought to be over 4,000 years old based on archaeological finds in the city centre and some nearby caves. It was a city that prospered during the Persian occupation, by Harpagus in the 6th Century BC. This prosperity continued through the Roman and Byzantine Eras. Tlos was one of the most important cities in the Lycian League where it was described as “the very brilliant metropolis of the Lycian nation.”

Tlos was believed to have been the home of the legendary hero Bellerophon (he who slayed the fire breathing chimera) and his winged horse Pegasus. Tlos society was divided into several castes, the names of some were Bellerophon, Lobates & Sarpedon (legendary Lycian heroes).



Arial View of Tlos from Akdeniz University Website



Theatre



Large Stadium

The list of structures that have relatively recently been excavated in Tlos includes: -

Acropolis & Castle

Agora (Marketplace)

Great Bath

City Basilica

Temple of Kronos

Gymnasium Bath

Necropolis

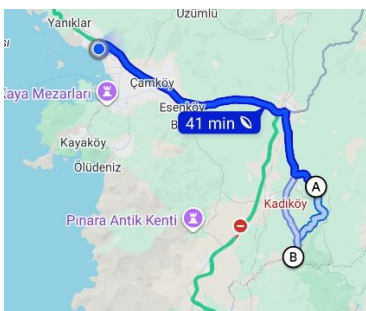
Stadium Area

Theatre

The nearby Cave settlements at Girmeler Take this [LINK](#)

The Akdeniz University Website has some excellent pictures from the site and information on the excavations [LINK](#)

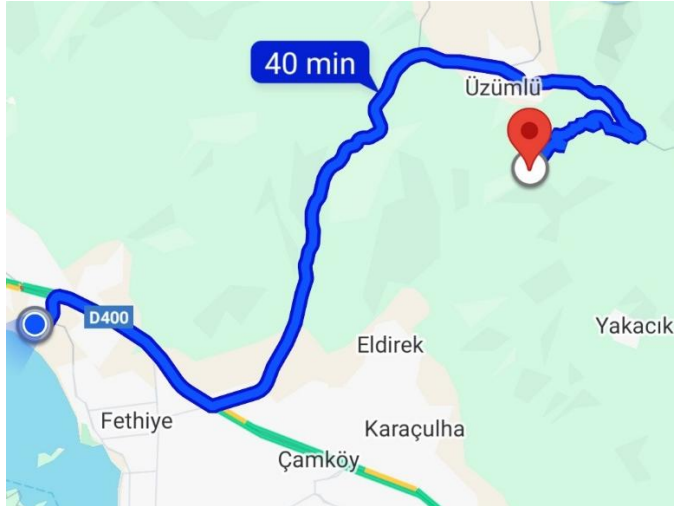
Tlos is a short 41min drive from Fethiye and many people add in a stop at nearby Saklikent Gorge. A Tlos trip can be combined with a number of other Lycian sites and capitals. See more in the itinerary section.



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Kadyanda - [LINK](#)

Kadyanda is a short drive from Fethiye into the hills as you head above the charming village of Üzümlü, a great stop for a coffee before you go exploring. The site is above Üzümlü on an 8km stabilised road that climbs steeply up from the road towards Ortaköy. Well off the beaten track you certainly won't be overrun with other tourists!



40 Minute Drive



Stadium



Temple



Necropolis



City Wall



Mausoleum

The city dates back well into the past, although little mention is made of the city by ancient historians it is clear that this was an important city.

Extensive remains today include a stadium, a theatre, baths, agora and several temples. On one side of the agora stood a Dorian temple, on its walls a long list of contributors was legible.

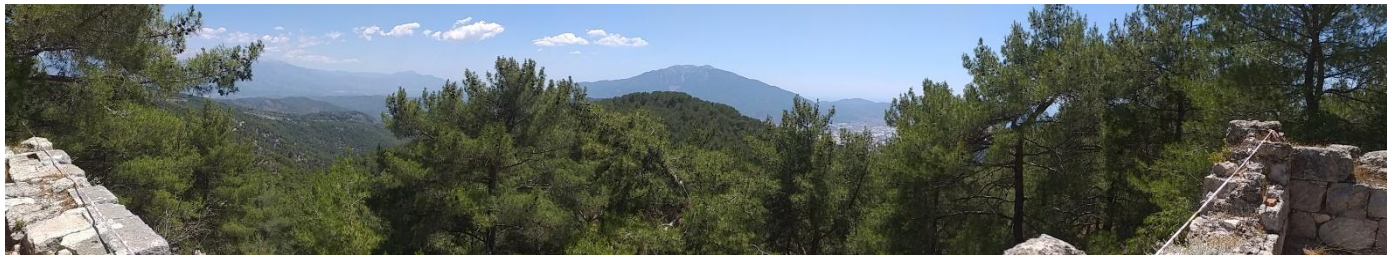
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A town with many names! Kadyanda, Cadyanda or Cadiyanda was known as “Kadawanti” in Lycian inscriptions. The -nd suffix in the name leads us to believe that the settlement dates back to 3,000BC, but today’s visible ruins date back no more than to the 5th Century BC. Part of the city wall and some inscriptions date from 500BC. The Greek (Hellenistic) theatre was repaired during the Roman era, but still retains signs of it’s former glory.

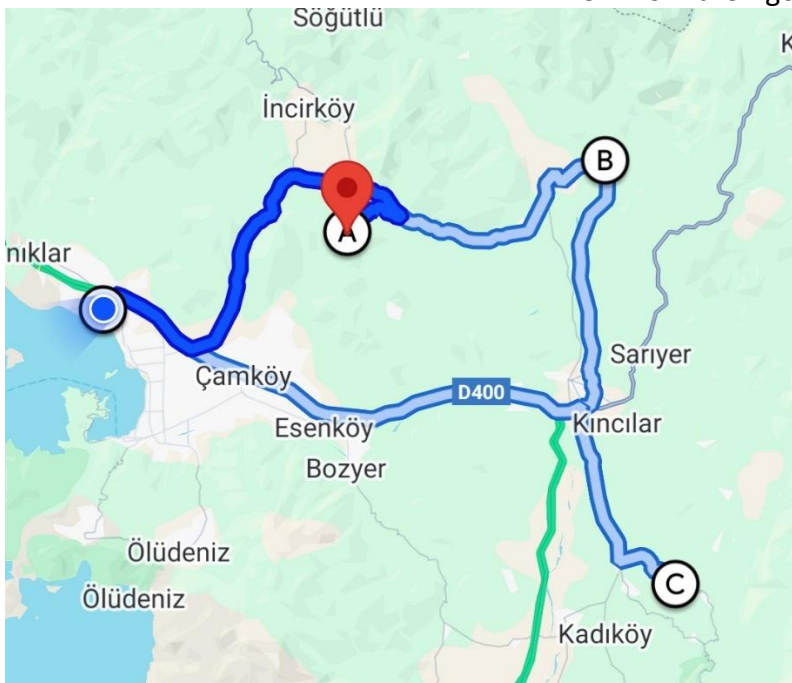
As with many cities built in the higher mountains, water supply was an issue. There are 4 interconnecting water cisterns near the stadium. Whilst the city was occupied until 7th Century AD the majority of remains date from the Roman Era. Artefacts from the later period have been few and far between.



Theatre



View from the Agora

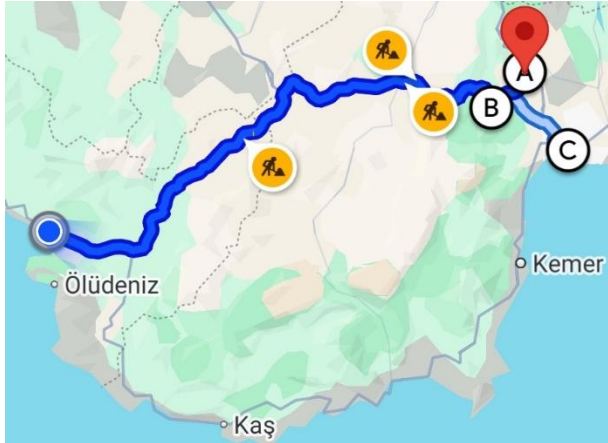


Given that Kadyanda is so close and takes no more than 2hours to explore fully you might choose to head over to the Ören village fish farms for a lunch and maybe continue to Tlos before heading home. Kadyanda can also be included in longer itineraries, see the itinerary section later on in this document.

The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia

Termessos & Karain Caves - [LINK CAVES LINK](#)

Termessos is a classic hilltop settlement just off the main E87 road into Antalya. It is very close to Karain Caves and you should plan to visit both on the same trip. The caves are accessed by a steep climb up some well-made wooden steps which take you to the entrance of the caves. As Termessos is close to Antalya, hence quite a long drive from Fethiye, you'll probably go here as part of a longer trip, perhaps a visit to Antalya's Old Town (Kaleiçi). It's an interesting site with a wonderful mountaintop view from the theatre.



To Termessos & Kaleiçi via Karain Caves

Termessos is one of the best preserved of the ancient cities in Turkey. The city was founded by the Solymi, who were mentioned by Homer in the *Iliad* in connection with the legend of Bellerophon. Originally a Pisidian settlement, it integrated into the Greek world after Alexander the Great's conquests. By the turn of the second and third centuries AD, under Imperial Roman rule, it had become a thriving provincial city. Most of Termessos' history starts at the time that Alexander the Great surrounded the city in 333 BC; he likened the city to an eagle's nest. It is one of only a few cities he failed to conquer.

It has been noted that Termessos could easily be defended by a small force it due to insurmountable natural barriers around the city. Alexander wanted to go to Phrygia from Pamphylia, and according to Arrian, the road passed by Termessos. Alexander wasted much time and effort trying to force his way through the pass, which had been closed by the Termessians, and so, in anger he turned toward Termessos and surrounded it. Probably because he knew he could not capture the city, Alexander did not undertake an assault, but instead marched north and vented his fury on Sagalassos.

In 319 BC, after the death of Alexander, one of his generals, Antigonos Monophtalmos, proclaimed himself master of Asia Minor and set out to do battle with his rival [Alcetas](#) of [Pisidia](#). He took 40,000 infantry, 7,000 cavalry, and numerous elephants. Unable to vanquish these superior forces, [Alcetas](#) and his friends sought refuge in Termessos. The Termessians gave Alcetas their word that they would help him.



Relief of Alcetas on his horse

Antigonos then returned and demanded the body of Alcetas. This caused a split between the elders and the youth of Termessos. The elders agreed to hand Alcetas over whilst the youth didn't want to so they told Alcetas of the plan. Alcetas preferred to kill himself but the elders still handed over his corpse which was abused for 3 days before being left unburied. The youths then took body and buried it with full honours, and erected a beautiful monument to his memory.

The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia



City Walls



Fortifications

Termessos was an ally and supporter of the Roman Republic, and so in 71 BC was granted independent status by the Roman Senate; according to this law its freedom and rights were guaranteed. This independence was maintained continuously for a long time. In the imperial period, Termessos became part of the Roman province of Lycia et Pamphylia. By the turn of the second and third centuries AD, it had become a thriving provincial city. The end of Termessos came when its aqueduct was crushed in an earthquake, destroying the water supply to the city. The city was abandoned (year unknown), which helps to explain its remarkable state of preservation today.



Bath & Gymnasium



Aqueduct



Council Chamber



Clifftop Theatre

Karain Caves

Karain is a complex of caves that consists of three main chambers and corridors, separated by calcite walls, narrow curves and passageways. Halls and galleries contain [speleothems](#).^[1]

Occupation

Karain Caves

The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia

Karain is a complex of caves that consists of three main chambers and corridors, separated by calcite walls, narrow curves and passageways. Halls and galleries contain stalactites & stalagmites.



Access Steps



Entrance



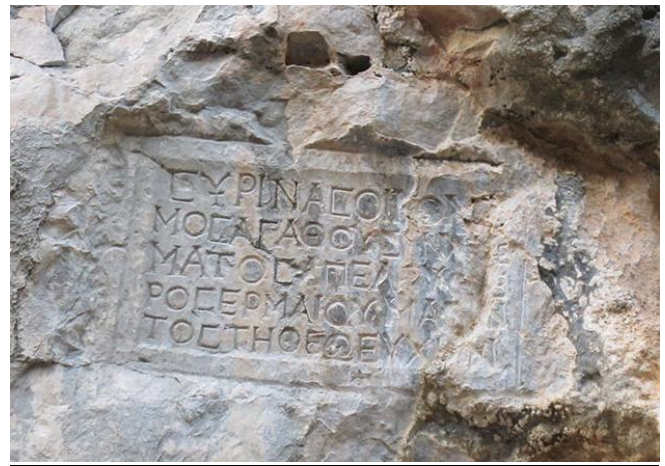
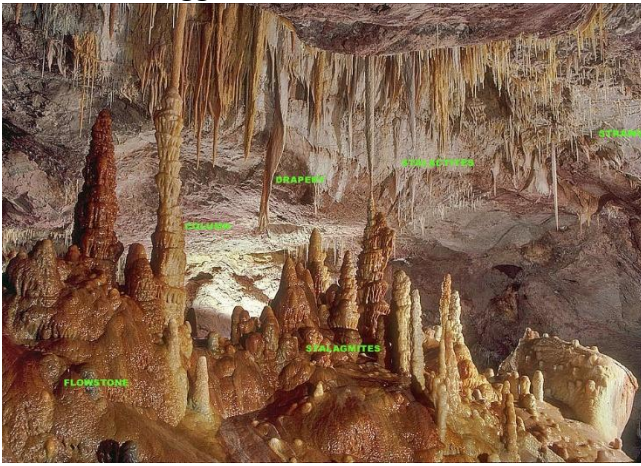
Corridor



Galleries

Occupation from 200,000 years ago!

A fragment of a [Neanderthal](#) cranium discovered and dated confirms human habitation since the early [Paleolithic](#) age between 150,000 and 200,000 years ago. Researchers documented the continuity of human presence in the cave for a period of more than 25,000 years, from the [Mesolithic](#), through the [Neolithic](#) and the [Chalcolithic](#), to the [Bronze Age](#). It is assumed that during the time of Greek colonization of Asia Minor (Iron Age), the cave had a religious function, as Greek inscriptions and decorations suggest, that are carved into the rock in front of the entrance.



The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia

Letoon - [LINK](#)

Letoon was the spiritual centre of ancient Lycia. At its heart is the temple of Leto. Archaeological finds date back to the late 6th century BC. During the Archaic and Classical periods (7th-5th century BC) the site was probably sacred to the cult of an earlier mother goddess (Eni Mahanahi in Lycia), which was later superseded by the worship of Leto. A massive amount of excavation and preservation work has been done since I first went to Letoon some 20 years ago. The site is now more extensive, with excellent signage and well-maintained access paths. Letoon was not a city as such, rather a place of worship and for festivals. Its theatre is renowned as one of the most impressive of the Hellenic period.



Theatre in Classic Hellenic (Greek) Style



Portico

What's So Important About Letoon?

Letoon was the religious centre of Xanthos and the Lycian League. Inscriptions found at the site indicate that it was where Lycian rulers declared their decisions to the public. It was continuously occupied from the 8th century BC to the end of the Roman period of occupation.

Letoon, together with Xanthos are UNESCO World Heritage Site. UNESCO state that the archaeological sites at Xanthos and Letoon represent "the most unique extant architectural example of the ancient Lycian Civilization". A Stela inscription held at Fethiye museum has inscriptions in Lycian, Greek & Aramaic language and have led to a greater understanding of the Lycian language.



Recently Excavated Temples of Leto

Directions

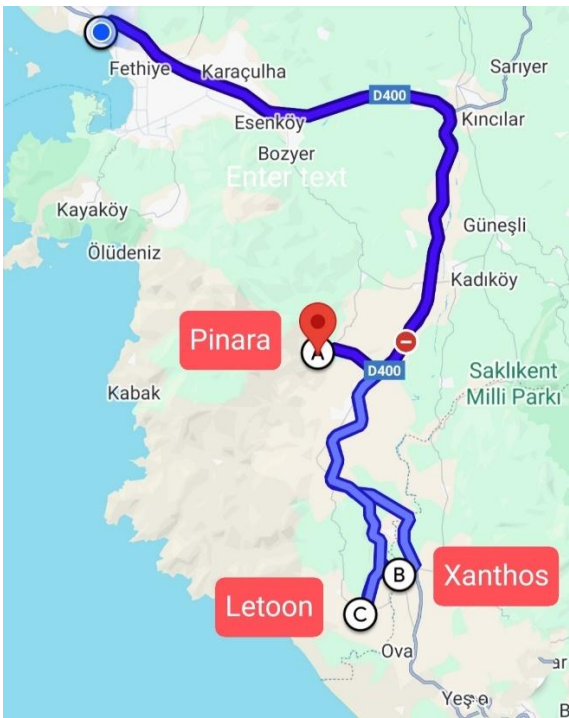
Letoon is a short drive off the D400 coastal road. A visit to Letoon can easily be combined with visits to the two Lycian capitals of Xanthos and Patara.

If you have already visited the two capitals then you may choose to combine Letoon with Tlos, Saklikent Gorge, Sidyma and or Pinara.



Mosaic from Temple of Apollo

The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia



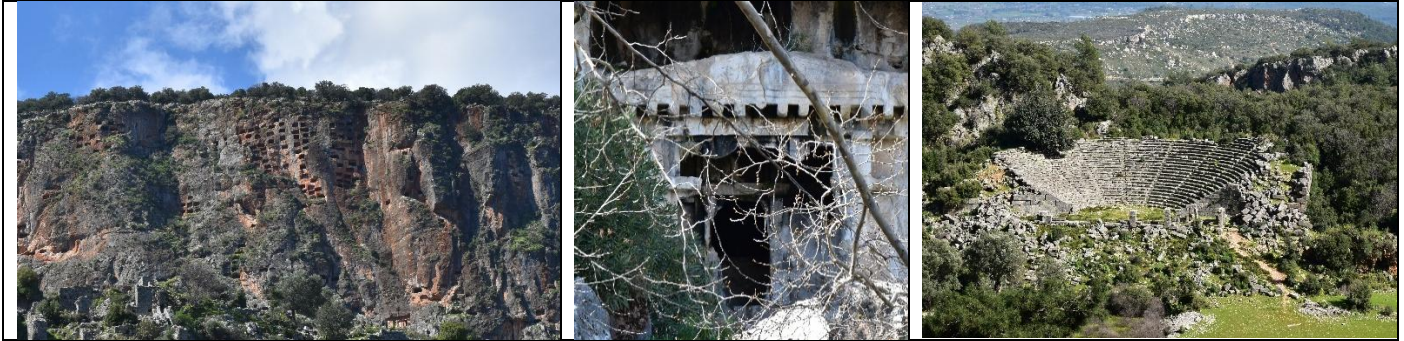
Letoon is easy to find, just a short drive off the D400. The site is compact and you can get to see a lot in a very short time. So it makes sense to combine Letoon with other sites. Letoon and Pinara are both closely linked with the ancient capital Xanthos. A round trip to visit all three involves less than 2½ hours driving and makes a great day out.

The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia

Pinara - [LINK](#)

Pinara was a large city of ancient Lycia at the foot of Mount Babadağ, and not far from the western bank of the Eşen River.

The remains of several ancient temples can be seen in Pinara, as well as rock tombs including one "royal tomb", an upper and a lower acropolis, a theatre, an odeon, an agora and a church. The name Pinara is thought to be origin of the name of the present-day village of Minare.



ancient writers, appears from its vast and beautiful ruins to have been, as Strabo asserts, one of Lycia's largest, its chief port city until the harbour silted up to form the reed-filled wetlands of today.^[2]

Pinara was a member of the Lycian League, in which it held the maximum three votes. The city surrendered to Alexander the Great in 334 BCE. After Alexander's death, the city fell to the kingdom of Pergamum. Pinara became a Roman city when Pergamum was left by its last king Attalus III to the Roman Republic in 133 BC. The city enjoyed prosperity during Roman rule, but was badly damaged by earthquakes in 141 and 240 AD. In the first occurrence, the city is recorded to have received a contribution from Opramoas (see Rhodiapolis below) for the repair of public buildings.

There was a cult of Pandarus, the Lycian hero of the Trojan War, in Pinara. It is believed that he was a native of the city. Yet another rare mention of the city in ancient sources is in connection with the help it provided, along with several other Lycian cities, to Pixodarus of Caria.

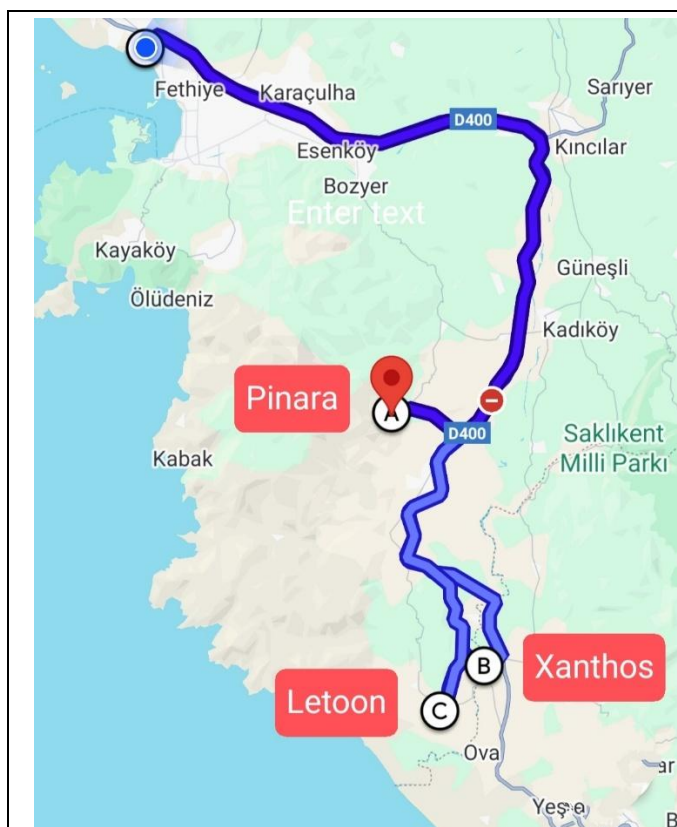
Pinara's ruins were identified by Sir Charles Fellows. He describes a singular round rocky cliff (Pinara means round in Lycian language), literally speckled all over with tombs at the heart of the city. Beneath this cliff lie the ruins of the extensive and splendid city. The theatre is in a very perfect state with all the seats remaining. The walls and several of the buildings are of the Cyclopean masonry (made with huge boulders), with massive gateways formed of three immense stones. The tombs are innumerable, and the inscriptions are in the Lycian characters, but Greek also occurs often on the same tombs. Some of these rock-tombs are adorned with fine and rich sculptures.

Pinara was Christianized early. Five bishops are known: Eustathius – 359AD; Heliodorus – 458AD; Zenas – 692AD; Theodore – 787AD; Athanasius – 879AD. Under repeated pressure from invading forces, the city lost its inhabitants in the ninth century.



Pinara is easy to find and there is adequate car parking. The variety and quality of the tombs is quite stunning. However, the site is very spread out and you will need sturdy shoes and a reasonable level of fitness to get around it all. For me the effort is well worth it. It's a great idea to take your time and take a packed lunch to enjoy the peace, quiet and nature that give Pinara a unique atmosphere. A place to let your imagination roam free!

The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia

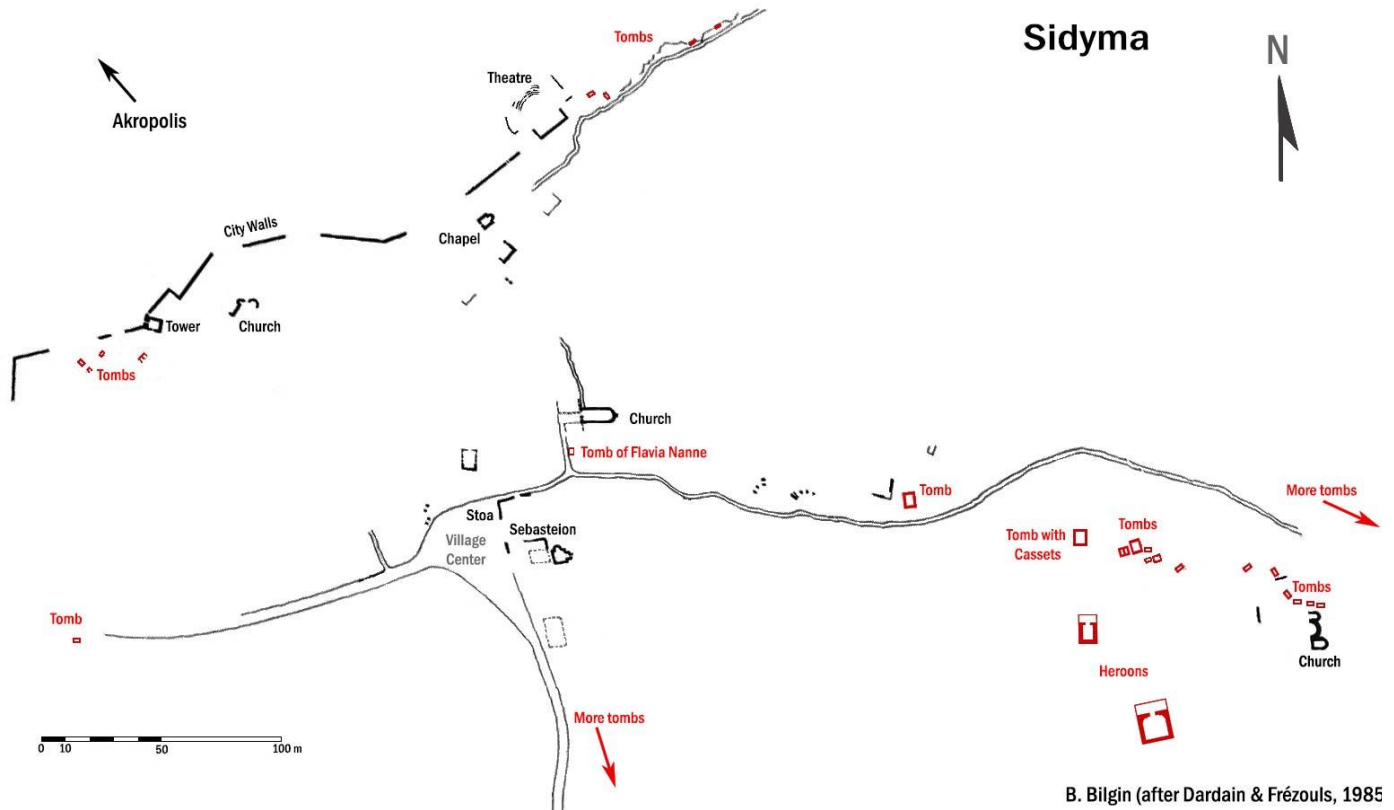


Pinara is about 45mins drive from Fethiye. As has been noted both Pinara and Letoon were closely associated with the ancient capital Xanthos. All three sites are close to each other and make a great combination of interest, wonder and beauty. A round trip to visit all three is under 2½ hours of driving so is an ideal itinerary for a full day out.

The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia

Sidyma - [LINK](#)

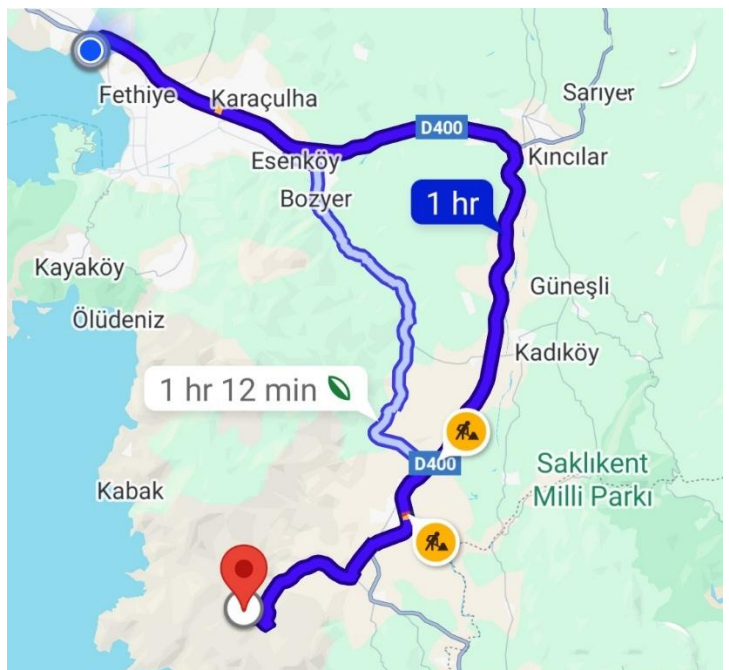
I haven't been to Sidyma for over 20 years but from what my research has revealed is that little has changed. The visible remnants are spread out around a modern-day village that has been built on and around the ancient ruins. The map below shows the village centre and the location of the most interesting tombs and buildings some of which require a bit of effort to reach them.



A good review of the site and some great pictures can be found on the Lycian Monuments web site [LINK](#)



A sarcophagus-like tomb close to the village centre is special with its cassette ceiling carved from a single block. There are portraits engraved on 9 of the total 25 cassettes on the ceiling.



Sidyma is a 1 hour each way drive from Fethiye, so is best combined with visits to other sites in the area such as Xanthos, Letoon, Pinara, Patara or Tlos

The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia

Rhodiapolis - [LINK](#)

Rhodiapolis is one of my favourite sites due to it's compact layout, the fabulous quality of the remains and its significance to Lycia. The remains are primarily from the roman era although some date back to the 4th century BC. It is a very small city but is perfectly formed and sits high on a hill overlooking the modern town of Kumluca and the fertile coastal plain. There is little evidence of anything other than a luxurious retreat for the rich and famous. It has two very significant citizens, Opramoas and Heraclitis.

The small reconstructed theatre is at the centre of the city and in front of it is a monument to Opramoas which has the longest inscription in Lycia. It details the philanthropic actions attributed to Opramoas. Not least of these is the donation of 500,000 dinarii to fund the reconstruction of public buildings, in 28 cities in Lycia. This is between U\$D25 – 50million. The Elon Musk of his day? Heraclitis famous orator and had extensive medical knowledge.

Rhodiapolis had only one vote in the Lycian league, as befitted such a small city, but it is believed that the fame and wealth of its citizens allowed it influence over other cities such as nearby Gagai and Korydella. It was also closely linked with the more influential city of Limyra. Thus it was able to punch well above its weight in politics.

The 141 Lycia earthquake - occurred in the period AD 141 to 142. It affected most of the Roman provinces of Lycia and Caria and the islands of Rhodes, Kos, Simi and Serifos. It triggered a severe tsunami which caused major inundation. The epicentre for this earthquake is not certain, with locations suggested at the northern end of Rhodes, on the Turkish mainland north of Rhodes near Marmaris and beneath the sea to the east of Rhodes. This is the earthquake that caused the inundation of the sunken city of Kekova.



Central theatre



Opramoas Monument



Apex of Opramoas Monument



Inscriptions from the Monument

The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia



Lion Head from a tomb



Section of Mosaic



Tomb of Opramoas

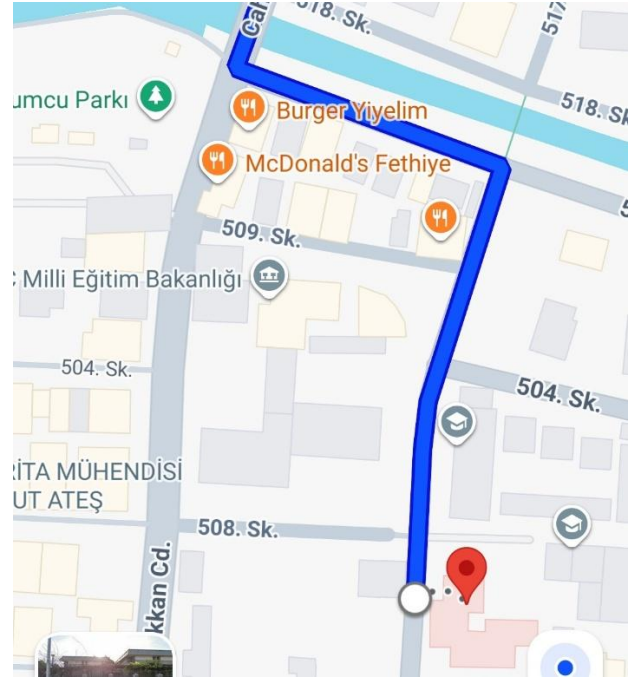
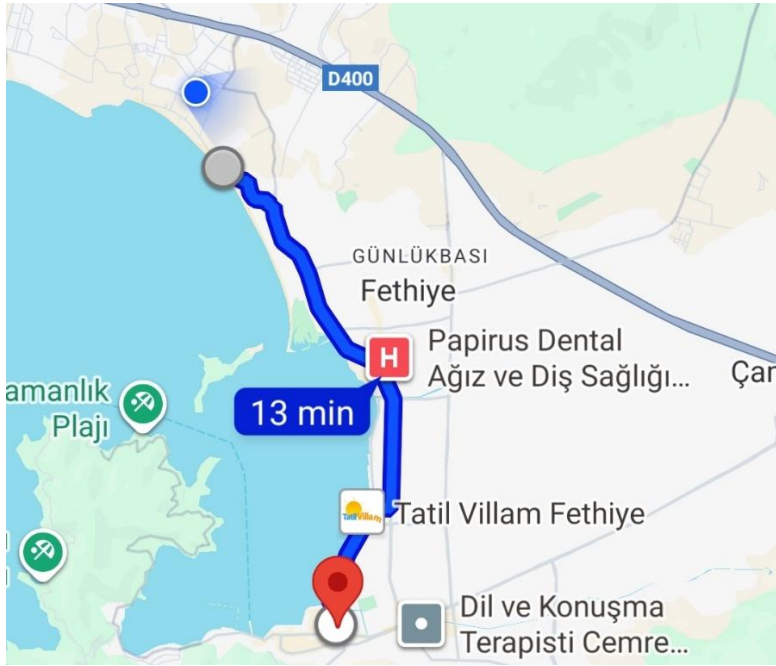
Rhodiapolis is really worth a visit but is over 3 hours drive from Fethiye so it's not a quick day trip. I can highly recommend one of my itineraries listed later on. The **"Secret Jewels of Lycia"** itinerary includes Rhodiapolis, Limyra & Arykanda, three fabulous sites where you'll normally see very few other visitors. It's a geart option if you're heading back from somewhere near Antalya. When I ran this itinerary from my hotel we never saw more than 11 other people across all three sites

The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia

Fethiye – Telmessos – Krya

Fethiye covers an area which comprised two ancient cities, Telmessos & Krya. Scattered remnants of these cities can be seen around the town. There is a castle that overlooks the harbour area and some tombs carved from the mountains behind. There are also tombs around some of the streets in the downtown area. These were cities at the very edge of the Lycian area and unfortunately very little remains to this day. There is however a very good, if compact museum near the harbour area (between the McDonalds and the main market area).

The Museum Website is at [LINK](#) and includes a nice brochure with an introduction and Opening Times (Note there are early closing times on Mondays and Fridays out of season).



Directions to the Museum

The museum contains relics from across the ages, many of which were discovered when building work uncovered them as Fethiye was developed. A tour of the museum, in Turkish, is available on YouTube where you can see some of the items on display. [LINK](#)

The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia

Miscellaneous Sites

There are many, many sites across ancient Lycia and I don't personally know them all. The ones listed below are, as far as I can tell, quite isolated, often difficult to explore or even find. So I have not included them as part of my review. I have however included links to web pages that have some introductory information. By way of illustration, I know of Araxa near Ören and I have seen some rock tombs beside the road but locals tell me the city remains are almost entirely buried. If you know differently then please let me know. I have been to Laidokeia on the foothills of Tahtalı Dağ (Mt. Olympos) near Beycik. I love going there but there are only a few remains Hellenic buildings to see, the location is stunning but it's a challenging 4½ hour walk to get there and back.



Laidokeia is on a sheer 100ft cliff; what a view!

Site	Link	Site	Link
Araxa	LINK	Laidokeia	LINK My video on Youtube
Oenoanda	LINK	Podalia	LINK
Cyaenae	LINK	Idebessos	LINK
Kitanaura	LINK	Trebenna	LINK

If anyone has direct knowledge of any of these sites I'd be pleased to hear from you.

The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia

OTHER SIGNIFICANT SITES

Whilst I set out to cover the history and ancient sites of Lycia there are three sites that I would like to include. The justification for this is that they are some of Turkey's more significant sites and they do have links with Lycia, Lycian cities & Lycian Culture. They are also great additions to some of the itineraries list later.

Perge - [LINK](#)

The most impressive ruins of the Pamphylian coast are at Perge, which is 15 km east of Antalya. Perge was originally founded by the Hittites around 1500 BC, but excavations have found relics from the early bronze (4000-3000BC). Known by the Hittites as Parha, it was a successful trading centre near the Aksu river when Alexander the Great arrived in 333 BC. He was welcomed in by the inhabitants and used Perge as base for his Anatolian campaigns. Alexander was followed by the Seleucids under whom the city prospered and Perge's most celebrated inhabitant, the mathematician Apollonius from Perge lived and worked. Apollonius was a pupil of Archimedes and wrote a series of eight books on geometry. In 188 BC Perge became part of the Roman Empire during which time the city flourished. Most of the surviving buildings date from this period. In 46AD St. Paul started his journey in Perge (biblical Perga) and preached his first sermon here. Perge gradually declined during the Byzantine period, as the Aksu river silted, but remained inhabited until Selçuk times after which it became abandoned.



View from the City Entrance



The Main Agora (Marketplace)



The Stadium

A Guided Tour Round Perge

A visit to Perge starts by entering the archaeological site through the Roman Gate, built during the reign of Septimius Severus (193-211 AD). Proceeding through the gate, to the right is the Agora or market place. This structure of 75 x 75 m dates back from the 2nd century AD. The centre courtyard and shops were surrounded by a wide stoa, a covered walkway. The floor of the stoa and shops was made of coloured mosaics. The agora was not only the centre of Perge's trade, but was also a place for meetings as well as a forum for political, social, and philosophical discussions. The next building is the Hellenistic city gate that dates back to the 3rd century BC.

The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia



Main Street



Statue of a God of the River

This is certainly the most imposing building of the city and was cleverly designed to protect the city with its twin towers and its horseshoe-shaped courtyard at the back. It is thought that the towers had three floors and were crowned by a conical roof. In the year 121 AD, the horseshoe-shaped courtyard was redesigned as a courtyard of honour. Behind the courtyard stood a triple arch. Around the arch there are about dozen inscriptions connected with Plancia Magna who lived in the 2nd century AD. She was the daughter of the governor, a priestess of Artemis Pergaia (Diana) and a benefactress to the city. Plancia Magna had the arch decorated with the statues of the emperors and their relatives.

After passing through the Hellenistic Gate and courtyard, one enters a broad, marble-paved double-colonnaded street measuring 300 meters in length that extends from the main gate to the acropolis. The street is 20 m wide and is divided in two by a 2m-wide water channel running down the middle. At the end of the colonnaded street is the Nymphaeum, a triumphal fountain from where a stream flowed down into the water channel. The *nymphaeum* or *nymphaion* is an ornamental semicircular structure and dates from the reign of Emperor Hadrian (130-150 AD). A statue of a river god *Kestros* was located in the centre of this huge fountain. Behind the nymphaeum is the acropolis with some remains of the Byzantine period. To the west of the nymphaeum are the remains of a palaestra (wrestling gymnasium) dating from 50 AD and dedicated to the Emperor Claudius (41-54 AD).

Returning back to the entrance, there are the excavated Roman baths located southwest to the agora. Out of the site proper, is the horseshoe-shaped stadium, the largest in Asia Minor, measuring 234 m by 34 m. The stadium had a seating capacity of 12,000 people supported by massive barrel-vaulted constructions. Just beyond the site entrance is also the theatre, which is of the Greco-Roman type and could seat 15,000 people.

The majority of the highest quality marble statues discovered in Pamphylia & Lycia came from Perge and are housed in the Antalya museum, which has two magnificent halls dedicated displays of these statues. See the Antalya Museum Section below. As the museum and Perge are only 18km apart it makes sense to visit them both. I recommend going to Perge first to see the environment and then go and be blown away by the magnificence of the statues & tombs in the museum.

The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia

Aspendos - [LINK](#)

Why visit Aspendos? Well simply put it is the best-preserved antique theatre in the world! It is home to the Aspendos Opera & Ballet festival which features top draw international performers in a stunning setting. Years ago, there were regular concerts and dance shows including the world-renowned Sultans of Dance show. These are now hosted at the nearby **FAKE** Aspendos theatre in order to preserve the real theatre.

The theatre was the heart of the ancient city of Aspendos and you can glimpse some of the remains of the city from the road as you drive to the theatre.

You will probably combine Aspendos with visits to other sites or attractions in the area. These may include the Düden & Kürşünlü waterfalls, Perge, Antalya Old Town (Kale İçi), Antalya Museum and even retail therapy options in Antalya.

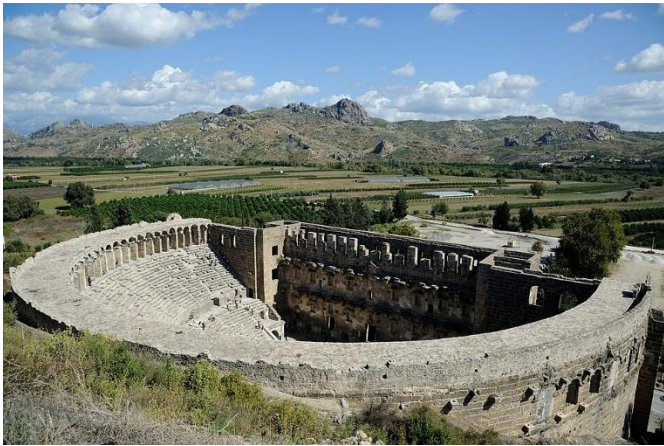


Photo by Saffron Blaze

The theatre has a diameter of 96m and was built by the Greek architect Zenon, a native of the city, during the rule of Marcus Aurelius (161-180AD). It was periodically repaired by the Seljuks, who used it as a [caravansary](#), and in the 13th century the stage building was converted into a palace by the Seljuks of Rum. There are 41 rows of benches, providing seating for 12,000 spectators. The stage wall is completely intact, only the original eight-meter-deep wooden ceiling has disappeared. Around the theatre, 58 holes have been found where there used to be poles, which could be used to stretch a large cover to protect the spectators from the sun



Aspendos Aqueduct & Siphon

Photo by [Panegyrics of Granovetter](#)



Aspendos Basilica

Photo by [Dosseman](#)



Aspendos Stadium

Photo by [Dosseman](#)



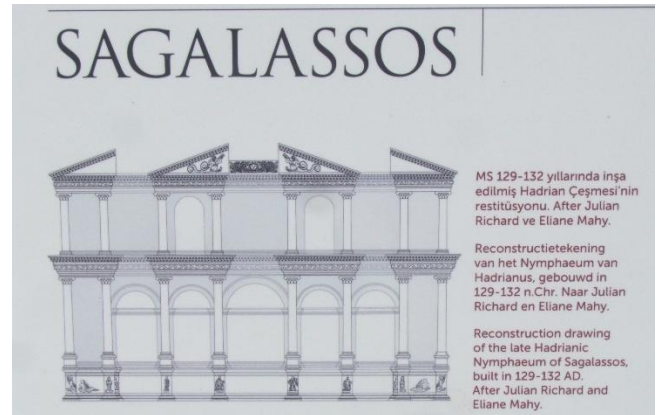
For **Opera & Ballet** enthusiasts the annual festival is a collection of world class shows in an incredibly atmospheric setting. I remember watching a full moon rise over the stage backdrop during a performance of Bolero, it's a once in a lifetime experience. This [LINK](#) is to a tour agent that can book tickets for the festival but also has a rolling gallery of images that show the mood and magnificence.

The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia

Sagalassos - [LINK](#)

Although not in the ancient region of Lycia I have taken the liberty of including Sagalassos for three good reasons. Firstly, it is one of the most majestic and interesting sites in the wider region and its history stretches back around 6,300 years. Secondly, it makes a good stop-off on a trip to or from Antalya and adds a lot to some of the longer itineraries I have included in subsequent sections. Thirdly, and for me most importantly, it may well be my favourite site. >there are certainly remains that would rival some of the best of Ephesus.

Drone Flight over Sagalassos - [LINK](#)



The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia

HISTORY OF SAGALASSOS AND ITS RESEARCH

IN 1706 A WESTERN TRAVELLER REDISCOVERED THE SITE OF SAGALASSOS, BUT ITS NAME WAS ONLY IDENTIFIED IN 1824. THE FIRST THOROUGH RESEARCH TOOK PLACE IN 1884-1886 BY COUNT K. LANCKORONSKI. FROM 1985 TO 1989 THE SITE WAS SURVEYED AS PART OF THE PISIDIA PROJECT DIRECTED BY S. MITCHELL (EXETER, U.K.) AND WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF M. WAELKENS (K.U. LEUVEN, BELGIUM). IN 1989 A SALVAGE EXCAVATION TOOK PLACE IN COLLABORATION WITH THE BURDUR MUSEUM IN THE POTTERS' QUARTER DISCOVERED IN 1987. FROM 1990 ONWARDS SAGALASSOS BECAME A BELGIAN EXCAVATION DIRECTED BY M. WAELKENS. INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH PRODUCED THE FOLLOWING HIGHLIGHTS:

- THE FIRST FARMERS DRAINED THE MARSHY VALLEY OF AĞLASUN CA 4200 BC, WHEN A DEFORESTATION OF OAK FOREST TOOK PLACE. IN THE COURSE OF THE 3RD TO 2ND MILLENNIUM BC THE INDO-EUROPEAN TRIBE OF THE LUWIANS COLONIZED THE REGION THAT BECAME PART OF THE ARZAWA FEDERATION, WHICH WAS ALMOST CONSTANTLY IN CONFLICT WITH THE HITTITES IN THIS BORDER AREA. PERHAPS THE NAME OF SAGALASSOS CORRESPONDS ALREADY WITH THE MOUNTAIN FORTRESS OF SALAWASSA MENTIONED BY HITTITE SOURCES DURING THE LATE BRONZE AGE. AFTER THE COLLAPSE OF THE HITTITE EMPIRE CA 1180 BC, SOME OF THE LUWIAN STATES MAY HAVE CONTINUED TO EXIST. THE LUWIAN POPULATION CERTAINLY DID, BUT IN CLASSICAL TIMES BECAME KNOWN AS DIFFERENT TRIBES, AMONG WHICH THE PISIDIANS, TO WHICH SAGALASSOS ALSO BELONGED.
- FROM THE 8TH CENTURY BC ONWARDS, DURING THE EARLY IRON AGE, A SECOND DEFORESTATION NOW MAINLY AFFECTING BLACK PINE, OCCURRED. IT PROBABLY REFLECTS THE EMERGENCE OF LARGER CENTRES, SOME OF THEM WITH A PROTO-URBAN CHARACTER. FROM THE 8TH TO THE EARLIER 4TH CENTURY BC AT THE LATEST, SAGALASSOS WAS LOCATED ON A FLAT PLATEAU CA 4 KM TO THE SOUTHWEST, WHERE IN 2005 A 22 HA LARGE FORTIFIED 'CITY' DATED TO THAT PERIOD WAS DISCOVERED.
- PERHAPS AS THE RESULT OF WATER PROBLEMS, THESE PEOPLE MOVED THEIR CITY TO THE CURRENT LOCATION THAT WAS CONQUERED BY ALEXANDER THE GREAT IN 333 BC. FROM THAT TIME ONWARD THE CITY AND ITS INHABITANTS BECAME QUICKLY HELLENIZED AND ESPECIALLY IN THE 3RD CENTURY BC IT STARTED LARGE BUILDING PROGRAMS. EVENTUALLY IT BECAME PART OF THE SELEUCID KINGDOM.
- FROM 188 TO 133 BC IT WAS RULED BY THE ATTALIDS FROM PERGAMON, AND THEN BECAME INCORPORATED INTO THE ROMAN REPUBLICAN PROVINCE OF ASIA. FROM 39 TO 25 BC, THE REGION WAS GIVEN TO THE GALATIAN KING AMYNTAS. AFTER HIS DEATH IN 25 BC, AUGUSTUS INCORPORATED IT NOW FOR GOOD INTO THE ROMAN EMPIRE.
- FROM HIS REIGN UNTIL THE 4TH CENTURY AD, SAGALASSOS BECAME THE LARGEST AND RICHEST CITY OF PISIDIA. A FIRST BUILDING BOOM TOOK PLACE UNDER THE JULIO-CLAUDIAN DYNASTY (25 BC - AD 68), A SECOND ONE FROM HADRIAN (AD 117 - 138) TO THE FIRST QUARTER OF THE 3RD CENTURY. THE CITY'S PROSPERITY WAS BASED MAINLY ON THE EXPORT OF CASH CROPS (WHEAT AND BARLEY, OLIVE OIL), BUT ALSO ON THAT OF TABLEWARES PRODUCED IN THE POTTERS' QUARTER FOR NEARLY SEVEN CENTURIES. THE 3RD CENTURY SAW AN INVESTMENT IN SEVERAL NEW GAMES RELATED WITH THE IMPERIAL CULT, FOR WHICH SAGALASSOS SERVED AS THE CENTRE FOR THE WHOLE OF PISIDIA. DURING THE 4TH CENTURY AD, A LOT OF BUILDINGS WERE REPAIRED IN AN OPULENT WAY.
- FROM THE 5TH CENTURY AD ONWARD CHRISTIAN STRUCTURES (CHURCHES) GRADUALLY CAME TO DOMINATE THE CITYSCAPE. AFTER AN EARTHQUAKE AROUND AD 500, THE CITY WAS STILL REBUILT IN A MONUMENTAL WAY, BUT THE RECURRENT PLAGUE STARTING IN AD 541 - 542 MAY HAVE ELIMINATED MUCH OF THE RULING CLASS AS WELL AS ITS ECONOMIC BASE. GRADUALLY, THE CITY TOOK ON A MORE RURAL CHARACTER AND MAY ALREADY HAVE BEEN PARTIALLY ABANDONED, WHEN A SEVERE EARTHQUAKE WITH ITS EPICENTRE IN OR NEAR SAGALASSOS WIPED IT OUT COMPLETELY DURING THE 7TH CENTURY AD. AT FIRST SOME FORM OF OCCUPATION MAY STILL HAVE CONTINUED, BUT EVENTUALLY MOST IF NOT ALL INHABITANTS LEFT THE CITY.
- IN MID-BYZANTINE TIMES AT LEAST TWO ZONES WERE REOCCUPIED BY SMALL VILLAGE OR HAMLET LIKE SETTLEMENTS (10TH -12TH CENTURIES AD). DURING THE 12TH-13TH CENTURIES AD A BYZANTINE FORTRESS OCCUPIED THE ALEXANDER HILL, UNTIL THE SELCUKS, UNDER WHOSE RULE TURKS HAD SETTLED IN NEARBY AĞLASUN, WHICH DURING THE 13TH CENTURY HOUSED A STILL EXISTING HAMAM AND A LOST KERVANSARAY, DESTROYED IT.

History from the sign at the entrance to the city.

The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia

Burdur Museum - [LINK](#)

If you go to Sagalassos or Kibyra then you should give serious consideration to stopping off at Burdur Museum. The museum is small but has many high-quality exhibits from both these sites. A visit to the museum will complete your view of either of these remarkable cities.

BURDUR MUSEUM
A UNIQUE JOURNEY THROUGH THE HISTORY OF CIVILIZATION

GENERAL DIRECTORATE FOR CULTURAL ASSETS AND MUSEUMS

1. Garden Exhibition Area
2. Entrance to the Exhibition Hall
3. The Frieze of Dancing Girls (Sagalassos)
4. Engagers (Sagalassos)
5. Lower Agnes Statues (Sagalassos)
6. Upper Agnes Statues (Sagalassos)
7. The Cult of Dea (Sagalassos)
8. Small Fish (Sagalassos) Information
9. The Galatians of Kibyra
10. Hunting Scenes
11. Finds Belonging to Other Archaeological Sites
12. The Statues of Artemis

13. 1. Hacılar Mound
14. 2-3-4- Karaca Mound
15. Hüyük Mound
16. Yarı Mound
17. Bronze Age
18. Lullapinar
19. Adıyü Fıstığı
20. Oil Lamps and Pots from The Hellenistic - Roman Period
21. Glass Artifacts
22. Metal Artifacts
23. Jewellery
24. The Clay Coins of Phidias and Roman Coins
25. Bressans
26. The Statue of Valerius

Visiting Hours
April 1 - October 31
Opening Time: 09:30
Closing Time: 17:30
October 1 - April 3
Opening Time: 09:30
Closing Time: 17:30
Open on site
Address: Özalp Bulvarı, 46100 Burdur / Turkey
Phone: +90 312 246 00 00
Have a better visit with us on our site and social media.

Turkish Museums @BurduzMuseumu Turkish Museums Turkish Museums Turkish Museums Turkish Museums
www.burdurmuseumu.com.tr 176 www.turkizmuseu.gov.tr



Today Burdur is surrounded by the provinces of Antalya, Muğla, Denizli, Afyon and Isparta and is located in the secure geography of Pisidia, surrounded by Isaurus, Lycaonia to the east, Pamphilia to the south, Lycia and Caria to the west and Phrygia and Galatia to the north in ancient times. Burdur's prehistoric past dates back to the Paleolithic Age. Later, concrete finds from the Neolithic (8000-5500) and Chalcolithic (5500-3200) ages, respectively, were unearthed in the Hacılar and Hüyük excavations.



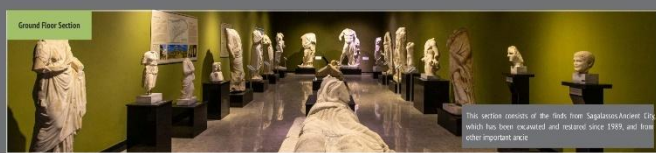
Upper Floor Section
The showcase, where Bronze age ceramics from Hacılar Mound, Karaca Mound, Hüyük Mound, and Yarı Mound (including prehistoric objects) from the Lycaonian Neolithic, Archaic, Hellenistic, and Roman periods, Oil Lamps, glassware, metal and several items as well as jewelry and coins are exhibited, take visitors on a journey to prehistoric times.



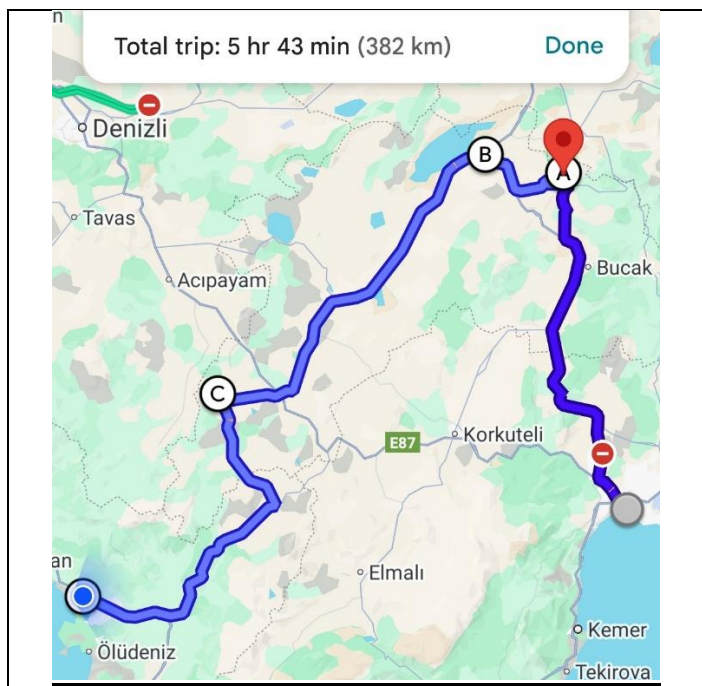
Emperors
These are heads and feet of colossal statues belonging to Hadrianus and Marcus Aurelius, two of the important emperors of the Roman Imperial Period, unearthed during the excavations between 2007 and 2008 in the Roman Bath in the Sagalassos Ancient City.



Garden Exhibition
Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine Periods in the exhibition arranged around the Ptolemaic Library in the museum garden.



Ground Floor Section
This section consists of the finds from Sagalassos/Ancient City which has been excavated and restored since 1959 and from other important sites.



To Visit both Sagalassos & Kibyra combined with a visit to Burdur museum it would make sense to make an overnight stay in Burdur or nearby Isparta. This would make the journey more comfortable and would add free time to explore Antalya Old Town or Antalya Museum.

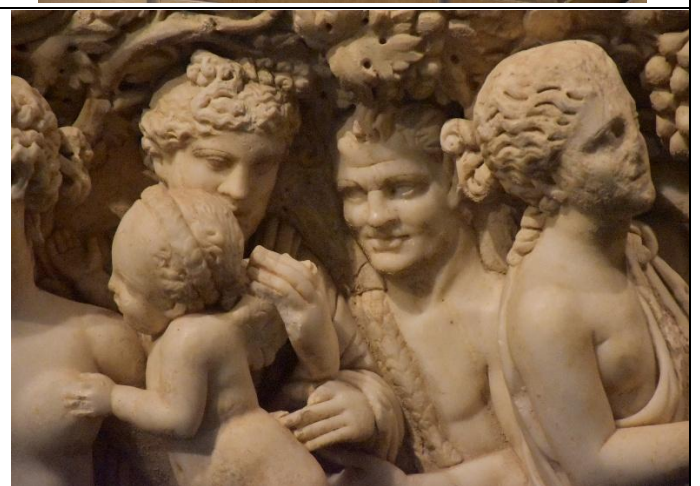
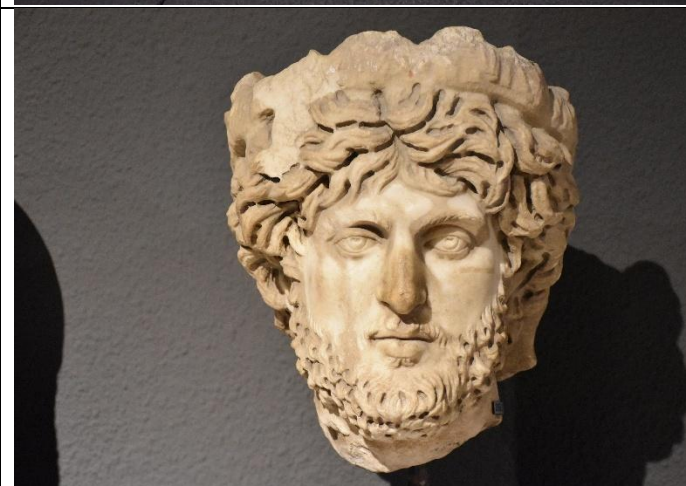
The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia

Antalya Museum – The Latest News – [LINK](#)

The museum is currently closed for reconstruction and all exhibits have been taken a way for safe storage. A new indoor and open-air museum is planned with a target of re-opening in 2026.

PLEASE CHECK IF IT IS OPEN BEFORE YOU PLAN TO GO – ALSO NOTE THAT THE MUSEUM WAS PREVIOUSLY CLOSED EACH MONDAY.

When open the museum is well worth a visit and has some spectacular exhibits on display.



Many of the most remarkable items are from Perge illustrating the fabulous wealth and prosperity of the city.

The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia

Closer to Home – Kayaköy – The “Ghost Village”

Kayaköy is a deserted village that was occupied until 1923 by a Greek Orthodox community famed as skilled craftsmen and artists. The perfect counterpoint to the Turkish farmers from the valley below the village and the surrounding area. The village was known as Livissi during the Greek period. In 1919-1922 the Turks and Greeks were at war. At the end of hostilities, the Treaty of Lausanne was signed resulting in a large population exchange. Greeks living in Turkey were required to Greece and vice versa. The village has remained deserted ever since. The majority of the original buildings (houses, shops, workshops and churches) remain and combine to make a large area to explore. Although eroded by time you can still find patches of the original paint on the walls which gives a glimpse into a village of brightly painted properties.



The narrow streets meander between houses a few of which have been restored for you to visit. Kayaköy sits on the Lycian Way. Signs and red & white Lycian Way markings will guide you through the village and on to Ölüdeniz if you want to include a walk in your visit.

A visit to Kayaköy is an enchanting exploration of a not-too-distant time and it's easy to imagine the village as a close-knit vibrant community.

The population exchange was a heartless act and must have been so disruptive to the people involved. The population exchange story is wonderfully captured in a book by Louis de Bernières whom it is believed was inspired to write the book after a visit to Kayaköy. [LINK](#)

The modern village of Kayaköy has many delightful bars and restaurants to try after your “Ghost Village” tour. You will find somewhere to suit every budget. Anything from a luxurious lunch to a Gözleme (Pancake) sat on some Ottoman Seating (Köşk).



Kayaköy Church

Kayaköy is a 15-20minute drive from central Fethiye and has a regular dolmuş service from the large mosque in central Fethiye or from the road that passes Erasta shopping mall.

The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia

SUGGESTED ITINERARIES

Muze Kart - [LINK](#)

The previous sections have identified a plethora of sites to visit where you can marvel at the magnificence of the ancient civilisations that ruled this area. You can learn in considerable depth the stories, historical facts and legends of individuals, cities and civilisations. You are in the birthplace of parliamentary democracy that sowed the seeds of the American constitution. You can wander amongst the legends and tales of the gods from Homer's Iliad. When it comes to legends there are few greater than those of Christmas, Santa Claus and the development of early Christianity. All this is set in a backdrop of stunning scenery and traditional agricultural culture and hospitality. We are truly blessed! BUT some of these sites and museums (particularly those that are popular with tourists) can be expensive. If, however, you want to dive deep into this wealth of history and culture you can cut the cost by buying a Muze Kart. There are different cards for Turkish Citizens & Residents AND for non-residents. The Pass which is stored on your phone provides free access to all sites run by the Ministry of Tourism & Culture. The Museum Pass is valid all over Turkey. You can buy them at museums and archaeological site entrances. Use the link above to choose which card is best for your needs.



The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia

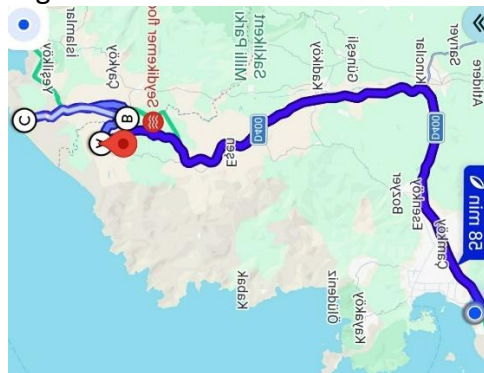
Some Itineraries

Day Trips from Fethiye

1 Capitals & Spiritual Heart of Lycia

- Drive from Fethiye to Letoon 1hr
- Explore the Spiritual Heart of Lycia 45mins
- Drive on the Xanthos the 1st Capital of Lycia 10mins + 1hr visit
- Drive to Gelemiş Koy (The village home of Patara) for lunch 20mins +45mins (lunch)
- Head to the ruins & visit the birthplace of parliamentary democracy 1hr 15mins
- Chill Out on Patara Beach & Dunes 1.5hrs
- Head home 1hr 15mins

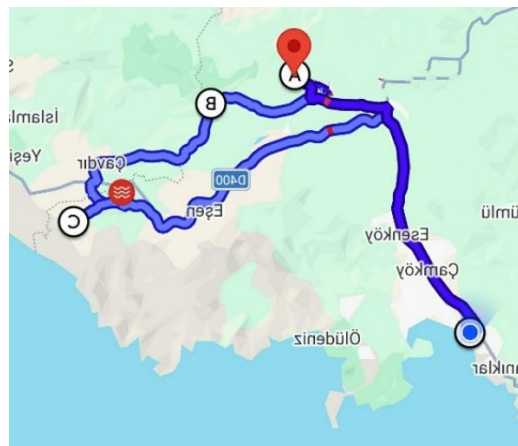
Driving 2hrs 45 Sites 3hrs Chill 2hrs Total 8hrs



2 History & Fun at Saklikent Gorge

- Drive from Fethiye to Tlos
- Explore the hilltop city
- Drive on to Saklikent Gorge
- Take a walk into the gorge
- Have a riverside lunch or lunch on a pontoon in the river
- Lots of fun for youngsters including ziplines and floating downriver on inflated inner tubes
- Continue on to Pinara, Sidyma, Letoon or Xanthos for more Lycian history
- Head home when you're ready

Drive 2hrs 55 Sites 2hrs 45 Chill 1hr 50 Total 7hrs 30



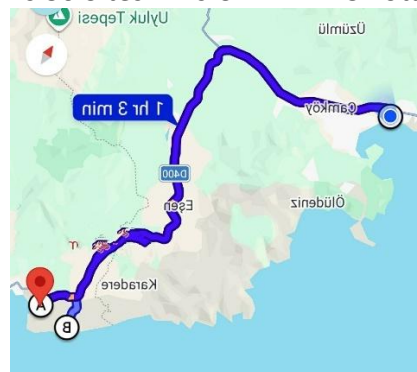
NB Many travel agents offer similar group guided itineraries or jeep safaris to these destinations

3 Acqueduct Siphon, Patara & Patara Beach

- This can be a gentle, relaxing day taking a look at the Acqueduct Siphon, visiting the ancient city & Spending time on the beach

- Drive past the entrance to Patara village and on to the access point to the Acqueduct Siphon 1hr 10mins
- Climb a short steep path to the Siphon
- Walk under the Acqueduct wall and see the long view of the siphon
- Drive on to Patara
- Walk down to the beach for lunch and time to chill
- Explore the ancient city
- Head back home

Drive 2hrs 30 Sites 2hrs Chill 1hr 45 Total 6hrs 15

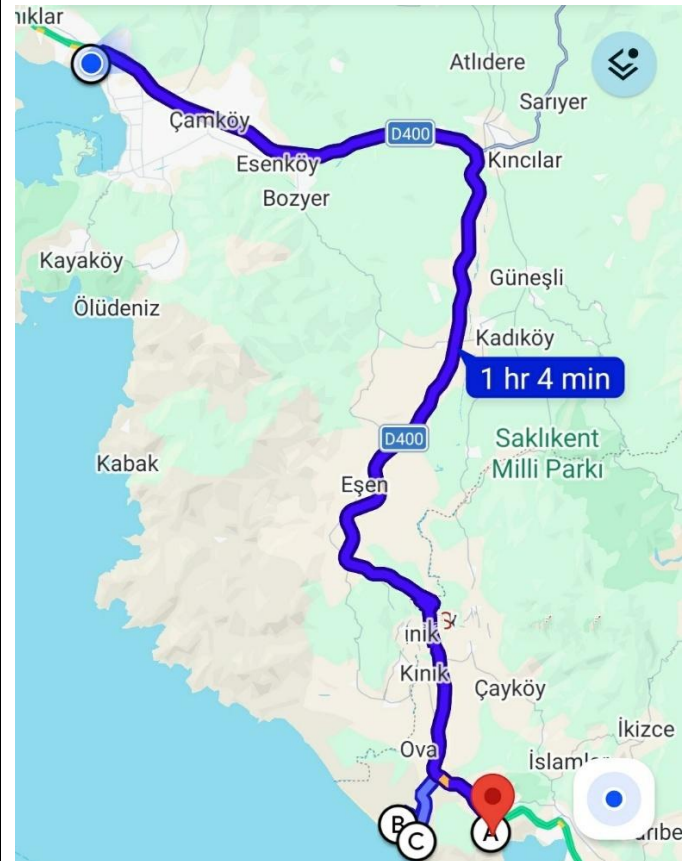


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4 Alternately this can be a trip for people who like to do a bit of walking

- Drive past the entrance to Patara village and on to the access point to the Acqueduct Siphon
- Climb a short steep path to the Siphon
- Walk under the Acqueduct wall and see the long view of the siphon
- Follow the Red & White Lycian Way signs to explore the area alongside the siphon, then head back to your vehicle on the tarmac road
- Drive on to Gelemiş Koy (Patara Village) and drive through the village and uphill then left to the head of the 100m high Sand Dunes
- Have a picnic in the shade of the forest
- Explore the “Lawrence of Arabia” dunes which overlook the beach, the sea and the distant ancient city
- Head to the ancient city (back through Gelemiş Koy then right onto the beach road
- Enjoy the magnificent city
- Walk to the beach for refreshments and maybe a swim
- Head home when done

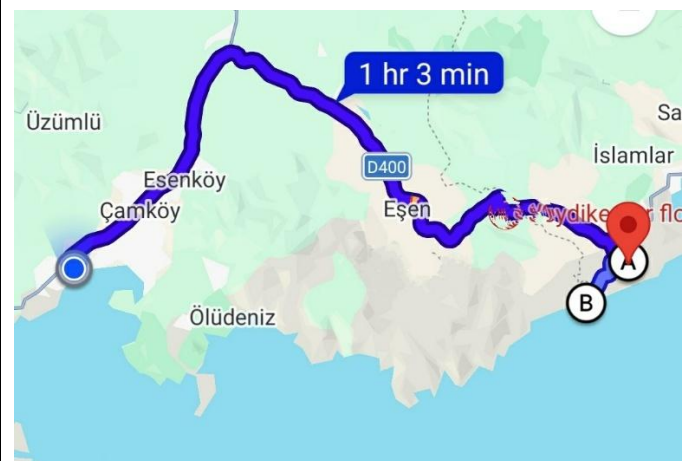
Drive 2hr 55 Visits 1hr 40 Chill 2hrs 30 Total 7hrs 5



5 Walking Tour of Patara

- Drive to Gelemiş Koy
- Take a taxi to the Çayağzı Beach Road
- Follow the sandy road to the beach and mouth of the river
 - Do not swim at Çayağzı there are strong currents and undertows!
- Walk along the long sandy beach and explore the dunes
- Continue to the café on the beach for a well-earned lunch
- Explore the ancient city
- Walk back to your vehicle on the main road passing the ancient city
- Head Home

Drive 2hrs 20 Visits 2hrs Chill 3hrs 30 Total 7hrs 50

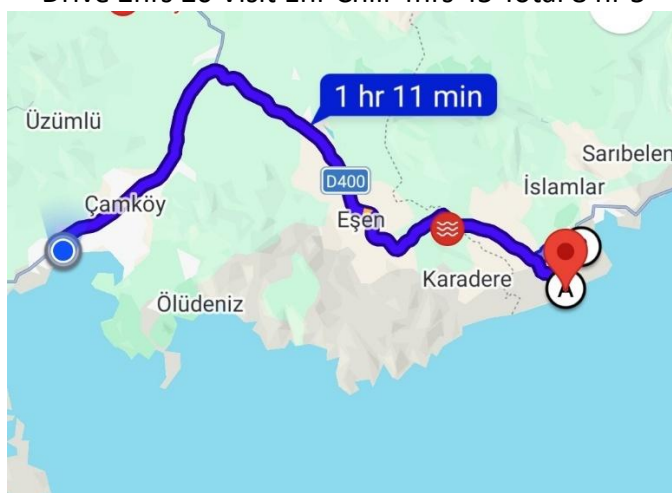


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6 Patara plus Deliklikemer Walk - A Lycian Way Walk

- Drive to the entrance to the ancient city
 - If you have 2 cars leave one here and continue in 2nd vehicle
- Take a taxi to the access point for the Acqueduct Siphon
- Walk under the acqueduct wall and turn right
- Follow the Red & White Lycian Way Markings back to Patara ruins
- The walk is about 15km with a couple of hills that are a little challenging
- Take a packed Lunch
- Explore the ruins after drinks on the beach
- Head home

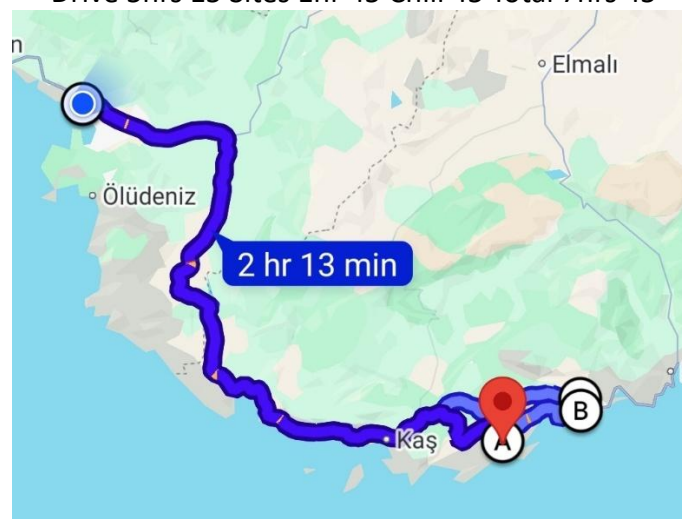
Drive 2hrs 20 Visit 1hr Chill 4hrs 45 Total 8 hr 5



7 Myra + Church + Kekova Diversion

- Drive along D400 past Kaş then right at the roundabout at the top of the hill
- Look out for a small roundabout junction where you Turn Right towards Üçağız
- Follow the winding roads to a junction again signposted Üçağız (Turn Right)
- Follow this road into Üçağız village & park on the harbour
- Have a lunch beside the sea - the fish, fish soup, prawns, octopus & calamari are excellent!
- Take time to explore the village's boutiques & narrow streets
- The ancient ruins are an integral part of the village
- Head back out of the village and Turn Right towards Demre
- Visit St. Nicholas Church
- Head on to the theatre at Myra before heading home

Drive 5hrs 15 Sites 1hr 45 Chill 45 Total 7hrs 45



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Kekova Boat Trip Options

The sunken city at Üçağız (Kekova) is well worth visiting on a boat trip, sailing over the underwater remains, snorkelling over harbour workshops at a beach with the remains of a temple on it and visiting the hilltop castle at Simena is a unique experience

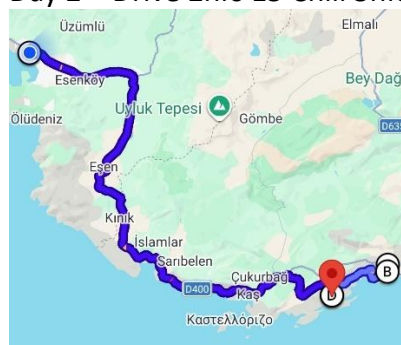
8 Myra + Church + Kekova Boat Trip

The drive to Demre takes 2hr 20mins each way and the best boat trips take most of the day so it's a very long day for a day trip. Accommodation in Demre is limited so you might consider an overnight stay in Üçağız to make it a more relaxed itinerary

- Drive to accommodation in Üçağız
- Lunch
- Drive to Demre and visit St. Nicholas' Church
- Drive to Myra
- Visit Myra and explore the rock tombs and magnificent theatre
- Drive back to Üçağız
- **Overnight in Üçağız**
- Full day Boat trip 10:00 – 16:00
- Head home – 2hr 15mins

Day 1 – Drive 3hrs 30 Sites 1hr 30 Chill 1hr

Day 2 – Drive 2hrs 15 Chill 5hrs



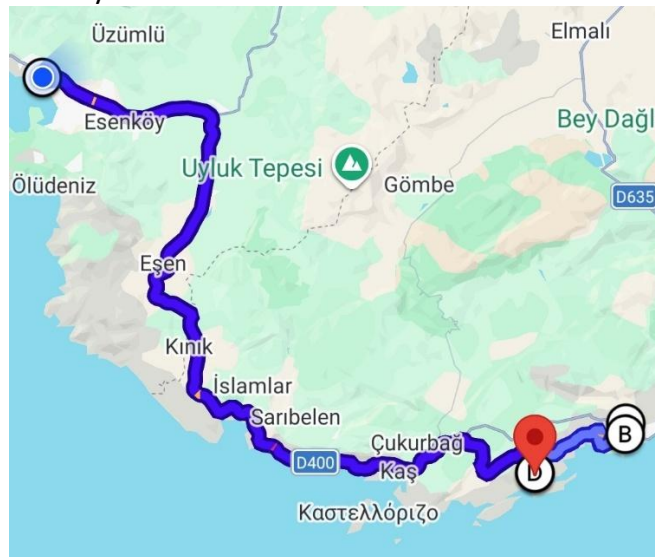
9 Kekova + Aperlae (Lycian Way) Walk + Sunken City Boat Trip

This itinerary is based at Üçağız at accommodation of your choice. Your hosts should be able to assist in arranging your logistics for the next day or two. I used to stay at a basic Pansiyon in the heart of Üçağız – Cennet Pansiyon - +90 533 462 8554 – Mehmet is the man to help you out

- Drive to Üçağız – 2hrs 15mins
- Check in at your accommodation
- Take a transfer to the start of the walk to Aperlae (Kiliçli) your hosts can arrange this
- Take a packed Lunch
- Follow Red & White Lycian Way markings to Aperlae
- Your hosts will be able to arrange for a boat to pick you up at Sicak Bay near Aperlae
- Cruise over the sunken city on your way back to Üçağız
- Overnight in Üçağız
- After breakfast explore Üçağız village
- Either walk to or take a boat taxi to and from the hilltop fort of Simena
- Head home – 2hrs 15mins

Day 1 Drive 2hrs 30 Chill 4hrs Total 6hrs 30

Day 2 Drive 2hrs 15 Sites 3hrs Total 5hrs 15



Options – break up the drive to/from Üçağız to visit Patara and or Xanthos and or Letoon

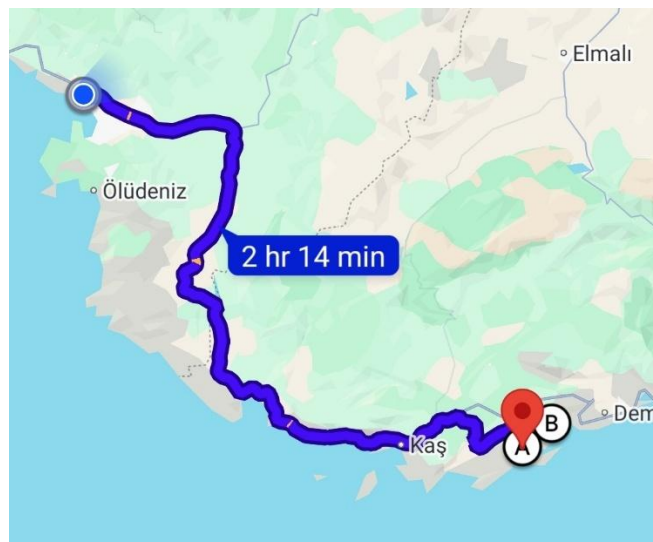
The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia

10 Kekova + Kapaklı Walk (Lycian Way) + Sunken City Boat Trip

As with the trip above you will need an overnight stay for one or two nights. Cennet Pansiyon would be my choice

- Drive to Üçağız 2hrs 15mins
- Check in to your accommodation
- Take a transfer / Taxi to the village of Kapaklı & take the paved road to the right of the mosque then turn right by the local school
- Follow the Red & White Lycian Way markings over a variety of landscapes to the rear of Simena and on to your accommodation in Üçağız. 14km - 4hrs 15mins
 - The route is very off-the-beaten-track but is well marked but you could also get some GPS points from the Wikilocs app. There are some short rough/scrambling sections
- Overnight in Kekova
- In the morning take a full day boat trip over the sunken city, snorkelling over ancient workshop at Tershane and explore the hilltop castle at Simena.
- Head Home 2hrs 15mins

Day 1 Drive 2hrs 45 Walk 4hrs 15 Total 7hrs
Day 2 Drive 2hrs 15 Boat trip 4.5hrs Total 6hrs 45



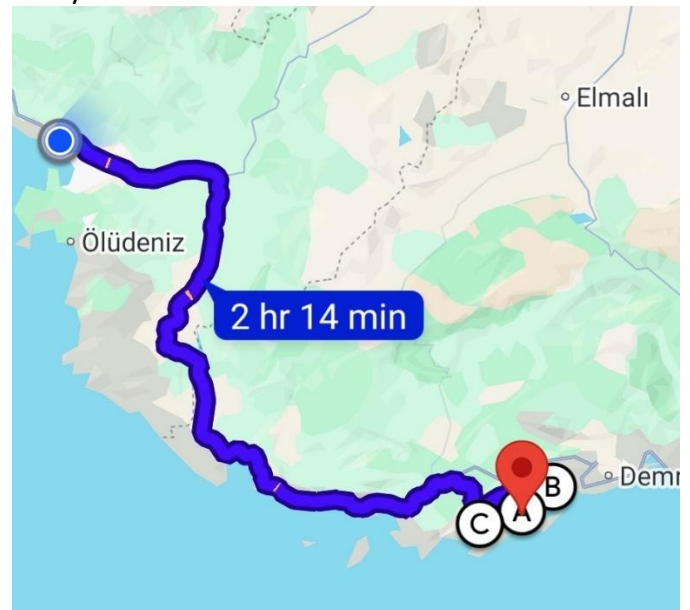
The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia

11 Kekova + Aperlai + Kapaklı (Lycian Way) Walks + Sunken City Boat Trip

You could combine the two itineraries above

- Drive to Üçağız 2hrs 15mins
- Check in to your accommodation
- Afternoon - Take a transfer / taxi to the village of Kapaklı & take the paved road to the right of the mosque then turn right by the local school
- Follow the Red & White Lycian Way markings over a variety of landscapes to the rear of Simena and on to your accommodation in Üçağız. 14km - 4hrs 15mins
 - The route is very off-the-beaten-track but is well marked but you could also get some GPS points from the Wikilocs app. There are some short rough/scrambling sections
- Overnight in Kekova
- In the morning take a transfer/taxi to the start of the walk to Aperlae (Kiliçli) your hosts can arrange
- Follow Red & White Lycian Way markings to Aperlae 2½-3hrs
- Your hosts will be able to arrange for a boat to pick you up
- Cruise over the sunken city on your way back to Üçağız
- Either head home or stay another night in Üçağız before the drive home – 2hrs 15mins

Day 1 Drive 2hrs 45 Walk 4hrs 15 Total 7hrs
Day 2 Drive 2.5hrs Walk & Boat 4.5hrs Total 7hrs



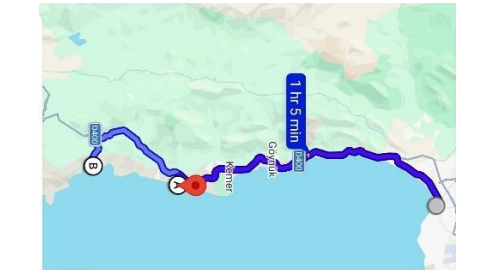
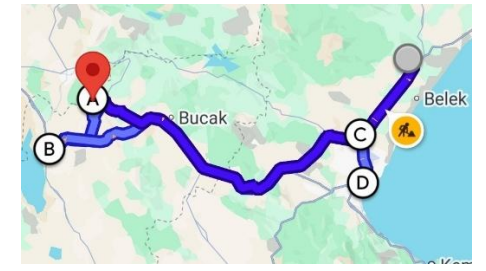
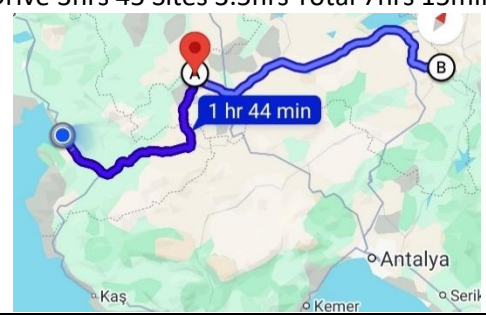
The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia

Kibyra & Sagalassos to Perge & Eastern Lycia

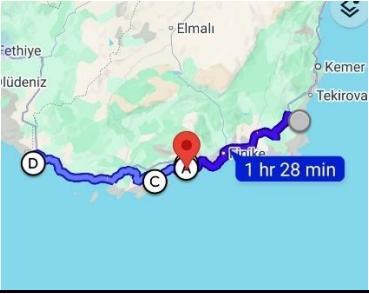

This itinerary takes you to some of the most magnificent ancient sites in the region. Whilst the sites are both stunning and fascinating, the route itself takes you on a roller coaster of some truly jaw dropping scenery. The route is a circular one that heads initially inland and into the mountains and high pastures before circling back down to the coastal plains on the far side of Antalya. The route home is along the coast road that hugs the coastal mountains with stunning mediterranean views.

The trip is a 4- or 5-day journey through a collection of civilisations dating from Old Testament times through to the modern day. Get ready to meet gladiators, legendary kings, princes, princesses, warriors, and fearful beasts of Homeric legends. Visit the lands of Alexander the Great, Hadrian, The Persian Satranc Harpagos, Marcus Aurelius, St. Nicholas and Santa Claus! These are the lands where civilisation and democracy matured and for Millenia were roamed by Nomadic tribes who are the ancestors of many of your hosts in Turkey. It's time to dive deep into the history and culture of Lycia 'The Land of Light.'

	Hrs	Mins	Cumulative	
DAY 1 - Visit Kibyra & Sagalassos. Overnight Sagalassos				Drive 3hrs 45 Sites 3.5hrs Total 7hrs 15mins
Fethiye to Kibyra	1	45	1	45
Visit Kibyra	1	30	3	15
Kibyra to Sagalassos	2	0	5	15
Visit Sagalassos	2	0	7	15
Overnight at Sagalassos Lodge				
Day 2 - Burdur Museum, Aspendos Perge & Antalya Old Town Overnight				Drive 3hrs 45 Visits 2.5hrs Total 6hrs 15
Burdur Museum	2	30	2	30
Sagalassos to Perge	1	30	4	0
Visit Aspendos Theatre	1	30	5	30
Visit Perge	1	15	6	45
Perge to Kaleiçi	0	30	7	15
Overnight Kaleiçi				
Day 3 - Eastern Lycia Pt.1 Phaselis, Olympos & Chimera Flames. Overnight Çirali				Drive 1.5hrs Visits 4hrs 45 Chill 1.5hrs Total 7hrs 45
Kaleiçi to Çirali	1	30	1	30
Visit Phaselis	1	0	2	30
Visit Olympos (Beach Walk)	2	0	4	30
Beach Time Chill Out	1	30	6	0
Evening Flames Trip	1	45	7	45
Overnight Çirali				
Day 4 - Eastern Lycia Pt.2 St. Nicholas Church, Myra & Optional Patara				Drive 4hrs 15 Visits 2 45 Chill 30 mins Total 7.5hrs
Çirali to Demre	1	30	1	30
Visit St. Nicholas Church		45	2	15
To Myra		15	2	30
Visit Myra		45	3	15
Demre to Patara	1	30	4	45
Lunch Patara Beach		45	5	30
OPTIONAL Visit Patara	1	15	6	45
Finish in Fethiye	1	0	7	45



The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia

OPTIONAL EXTENSION					
The initial itinerary includes major cities of the Ancient World. With a one-night extension in Patara you could include the major sites in Western Lycia.					
Alternate Day 4 - East Lycia Pt.3 St. Nicholas Church, Myra & Üçağız					
	Hrs	Mins	Cumulative		Drive 3hrs 45 Visits 1.5hrs Chill 1hr Total 6hrs 15 
Çirali to Demre	1	30	1	30	
Visit St. Nicholas Church		45	2	15	
Visit Myra	1	0	3	15	
To Üçağız		30	3	45	
Üçağız Seafront Lunch	1	0	4	45	
To Patara	1	30	6	15	
Overnight in Patara					
Day 5 - Major Cities of Ancient West Lycia Patara, Xanthos & Letoon					
	Hrs	Mins	Cumulative		Drive 1.5hrs Visits 4hrs Chill 1hr Total 6.5hrs 
Visit Patara & Dunes	2	30	2	30	
To Xanthos		20	2	50	
Visit Xanthos	1	0	3	50	
Picnic Lunch		30	4	20	
To Letoon		10	4	30	
Visit Letoon	1	0	5	30	
Drive Home	1	0	6	30	

Personalising Your Itinerary

This itinerary is a suggestion and can be changed to suit your own aspirations and preferred pace. I would consider another night in Kaleiçi (Antalya Old Town) in order to add a day to explore the Old Town and to visit the excellent Antalya Museum (Check opening times). You may also decide to add an extra night in Üçağız or Kaş. You can take a full day boat trip to the sunken city of Kekova from either.

There are many options for Kekova Sunken City boat trips. There are full day typically 10:30 - 4:30 incl. lunch which depart from Kaş, Üçağız & Andriake (Demre) Harbour. In Üçağız you can also arrange shorter trips such as a 2hr trip over the sunken city for 3-4 people in a fishing boat or a water taxi to and from Simena including seeing some of the sunken city. When you arrive at Üçağız you will be asked if you need a boat trip, Ask in the seafront bars and restaurants for the shorter trips, everybody has a number of uncles, fathers, grandfathers and brothers that can help you.

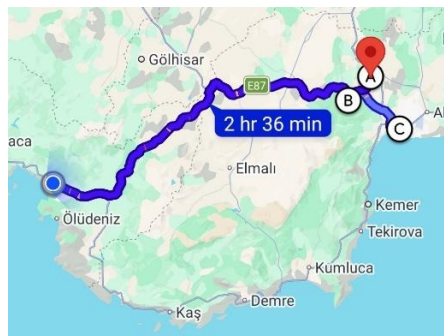
The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia

On the Way to and From Antalya

If you're travelling to Antalya, it's a minimum 3hr 15min drive. This itinerary can break up the journey with some classic historical site visits. The itineraries offer different stops each way. Both routes are based on the D350 yayla (high pasture) route through the mountains

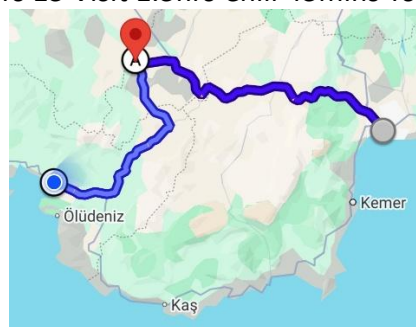
- **Going to Antalya**
- Drive to Karain Caves – 2.5hrs
- Visit Caves – 1hr
- Drive to Termessos – 30mins
- Picnic Lunch – 30mins
- Visit Termessos – 1.5hrs
- Drive to Antalya – 1hr
- TOTAL TIME 7hrs – Makes a day of it!

Drive 4hrs Visits 2.5hrs Chill 30mins Total 7hrs



- **Returning from Antalya**
- Drive to Kibyra – 2hrs 15
- Visit Kibyra – 1hr 30
- Lunch in Gölhisar – 45mins
- Drive Home – 2hrs
- Total 6.5hrs

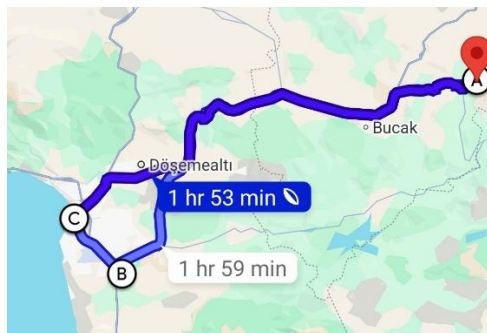
Drive 4hrs 15 Visit 1.5hrs Chill 45mins Total 6.5hrs



Sagalassos & Perge – Day Trip from Antalya

- Drive to Sagalassos – 2hrs
- Visit Sagalassos 1.5hrs
- Picnic Lunch – 30mins
- Drive to Perge – 1hr 30mins
- Visit Perge – 1hr
- Back to Kaleiçi – 30mins
- TOTAL TIME 7hrs

Drive 4hrs Visits 2.5hrs Chill 30mins Total 7hrs



The History & Ancient Sites of Lycia

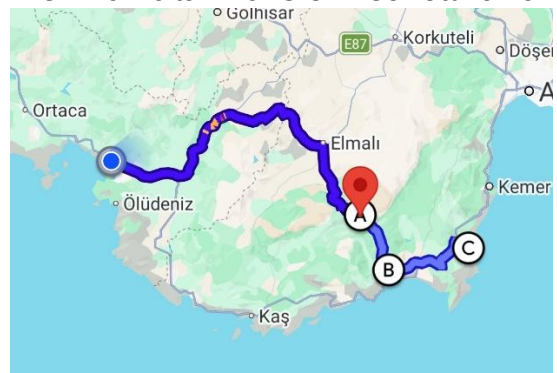
A Tour of Eastern Lycia

Eastern Lycia has some really fascinating sites to visit. From the magnificent Arykanda nestling between the high pastures and the coast, to the legendary city of Olympos and the Eternal flames of Chimera. There's the home of Santa Claus in Demre and the wonderful theatre and rock tombs at Myra. This is an area it's well worth spending time to explore and delve deep into ancient history and legends.

Day 1 – Arykanda & Limyra

- Drive to Arykanda 2hrs 30mins
- Visit Arykanda 1hr 30mins
- Lunch at Arykanda market – 30mins
- Drive to Limyra – 30mins
- Visit Limyra – 45mins
- Drive to Çirali – 1hr
- TOTAL 6hrs 45mins
- Overnight in Çirali

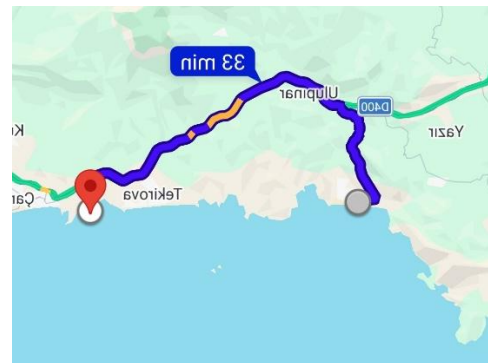
Drive 4hrs Visits 2hrs 15 Chill 30 Total 6hrs 45



Day 2 – Olympos, Phaselis & the Flames of the Chimera

- Beach Walk & Visit Olympos 2hrs 30mins
- Lunch in Çirali – 45mins
- Drive to Phaselis – 40mins
- Visit Phaselis – 1hr
- Return to Çirali – 40mins
- Evening visit to Chimera Flames 1.5hrs
- Overnight in Çirali

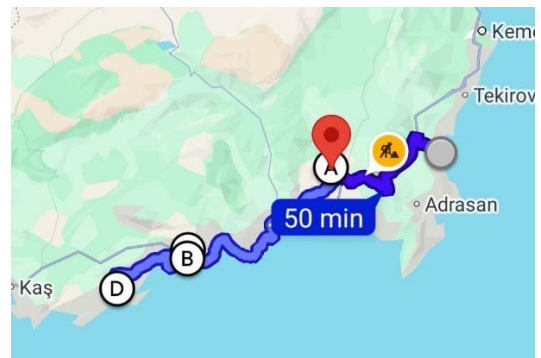
Drive 1hr 20 Visits 5hrs Chill 45mins Total 7hrs 5



Day 3 – Rhodiapolis, Demre, Myra & Hadrian's Grain Store

- Drive to Rhodiapolis – 50mins
- Visit Rhodiapolis – 45mins
- Drive to Demre – 1hr
- Visit St. Nicholas' Church – 45mins
- Lunch in Demre – 45mins
- Drive to Myra -10mins
- Visit Myra – 45mins
- Drive to Üçağız – 40mins
- Overnight Üçağız

Drive 2hrs 40 Visits 2hrs 15 Chill 45 Total 5hrs 40



Day 4 – Sunken City of Kekova Boat Trip & Home

- After Breakfast
- Sunken City of Kekova Boat Trip 5hrs
 - Including Lunch &
 - & Visit Simena Hilltop Castle
- Drive Home 2hrs 20mins

Drive 2hrs 20 Visit (Boat) 5hrs Total 7hrs 20

