

# Cappadocia



**Cappadocia** is a geological wonderland, is a region created by the erosion of soft volcanic stone by the wind and rain of centuries. It is renowned for its awe-inspiring natural rock formations which were utilized for everything from housing to churches and even complete underground villages. So far, thirty-six of the underground cities are known. Each of them was capable of accommodating several thousands inhabitants, supplied with water by underground springs and air through an elaborate ventilation system.

**Çavuşin village.** Like many ancient villages of Cappadocia, old Cavusin was abandoned several decades ago due to avalanches. The current village of Cavusin is located on the road. Old Cavusin, with its rock-cut dwellings and stone houses, had several hermitages. The two most important churches in Cavusin are the Great Basilica dedicated to St. John the Baptist (located on the cliff above the village) and Cavusin Kilise. The beautiful and elegantly carved facades of the houses of old Cavusin furnish evidence of how impressive the village once was.

**Zelve** is one of the best examples of troglodyte (cave dweller) communities in existence today, and exemplifies man's ability to adapt himself to his environment in a harmonious manner. Because the volcanic rocks and cones provided insulation from the unrelenting heat of summer and the freezing cold of winter, the cave dwellers of this region developed ingenious ways of creating comfortable living quarters, churches, monasteries, pigeon houses, and storage areas.



**Avanos** Avanos was on an ancient trading route between the Hittite capital of Hattusa (circa 1300 BC) and the old city due south that is now called Nevsehir. Avanos was inhabited by Assyrian trade colonies during the second millennium BC and was later taken over by the Hittites at about 1950 BC. Flowing through Avanos is the longest river in Turkey, which in ancient times was called Halys. The modern word for this river is Kizilirmak, meaning Red River. Red clay, containing iron ore that colors the water, is found along the banks of the river. The clay has been used since the early ages for making pottery.

**Göreme.** The valley of Goreme in Cappadocia developed as an important monastic center after the Iconoclast Period (8th to 9th centuries), when icons and other figurative representations were prohibited. From the second half of the 9th century on, a number of small, single-nave churches were built in Goreme, the most outstanding examples being Kiliçlar Kilise (first half of the 10th century) and Yeni Tokali Kilise (mid-10th century), both of which contain the finest Byzantine paintings in Cappadocia. The 11th century represents the "golden age" of religious art in Goreme. Three of the churches from this period are known as the "Columned Churches" because they share the same iconography and architecture.

**Underground city.** Another interesting phenomenon found in Cappadocia is its underground cities. Although many underground cities were discovered in Cappadocia, the finest examples are Derinkuyu and Kaymakli, which are located between Nevsehir and Nigde. Beneath the earth lie these rock-cut cities, which extend for several kilometers in different directions. Certain parts of the cities have up to eight or nine levels, and form a veritable labyrinth of narrow tunnels leading to rooms of various sizes numbering in the thousands. The tunnels meet at intersections where they form squares.





**Uçhisar.** As the highest point in Goreme, Uchisar offers a marvelous introduction to the region. Excellent examples of various types of volcanic formations found in Cappadocia can be seen from the top of the "fort," a natural rock formation. The "fort" consists of two enormous rock cones surrounded by a multitude of smaller ones resembling towers. In the cones many rock-cut dwellings have living rooms, kitchens, storage areas, and stables carved at various levels. Due to avalanches, the houses at the foot of the "fort" are no longer inhabited.

**Hot-Air Balloon.** A hot-air balloon flight is unique from all other experiences of flight as there is no sensation of motion. Travelling at heights of up to 1500 feet, the feeling is one of peace and tranquility. The earth slowly descends and rotates below you. Within moments after lifting off you become at ease while you effortlessly drift over the treetops and the spectacular Cappadocian landscape. It is like a dream to gently float over the countryside in complete harmony with your surroundings. The deep canyons and lush fertile valleys of Cappadocia provide our balloons with an ideal playground for a unique and memorable flight; gentle winds carry us over places that could never be reached except by balloon. Ballooning can be such fun! In season we can even pick apricots from the trees!

Furthermore in Cappadocia are several famous cave restaurants such as the Uranus Restaurant or , which are famous with its 'Comlek Kebap' which is a kebab cooked in a special earthen ware pot.