

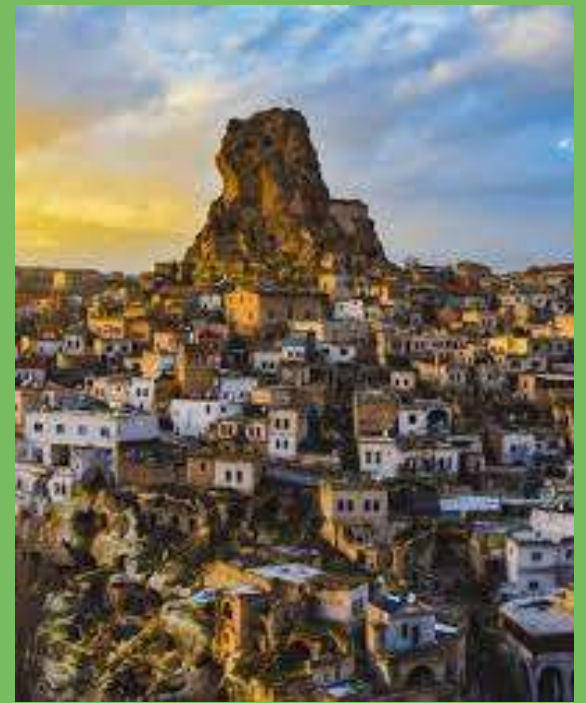


# Cappadocia

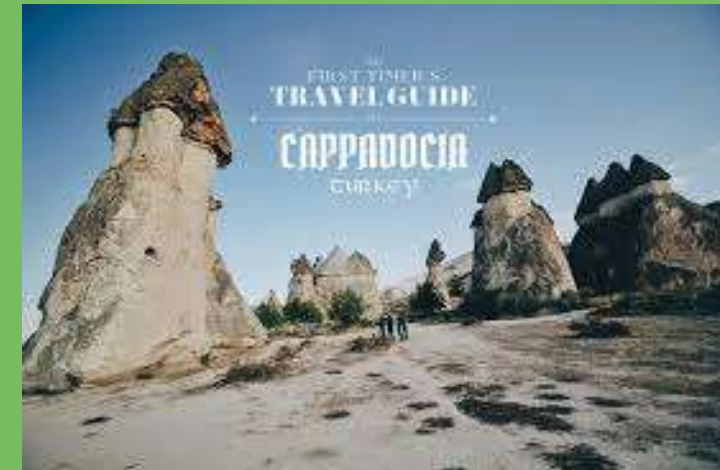
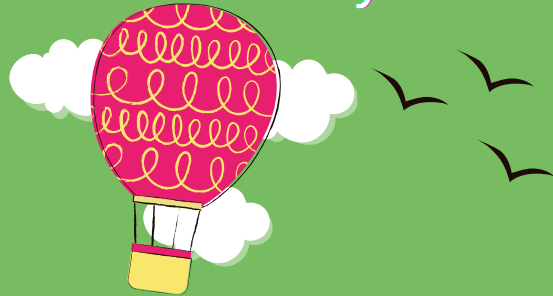
**The City of Fairy Chimneys**



The region of Cappadocia is located in the middle of a once-active volcanic area of central Anatolia. Millions of years ago three mountains - Erciyes, Hasandağ and Güllüdağ - were active volcanoes; indeed this activity persisted intermittently at least into the Neolithic period according to the prehistoric paintings. The volcanic eruptions were so strong that in some places the lava was up to 150m in thickness. Over many millions of years, volcanoes, wind, rain and ice sculpted the region which we now know as Cappadocia. As the landscape was eroded, basalt stones remained and formed conical structures with some reaching as high as 45m.

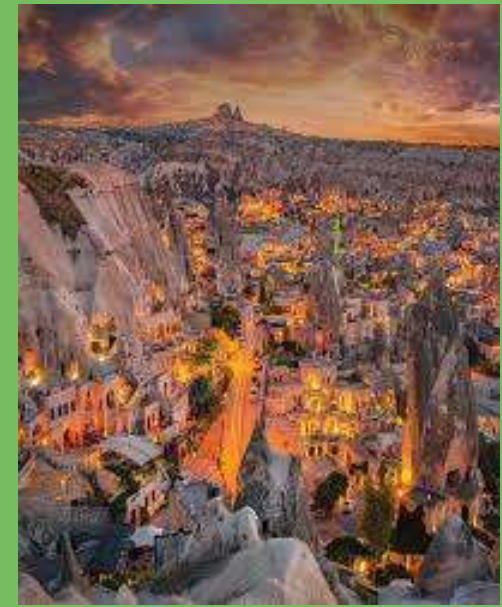


The local people referred to these unique rock formations "fairy chimneys", a name that has endured throughout the ages. If nature was the first artist to arrange the decor, it was Anatolian man who carved the rock and built houses, churches and over 250 underground cities out of it over the centuries. The chimneys are a result of a geologic process that began millions of years ago, when volcanic eruptions rained ash across what would eventually become Turkey.

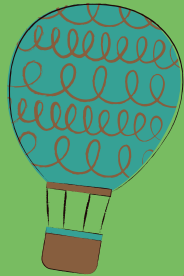




That ash hardened into tuff, a porous rock, which was covered by a layer of basalt. Finally, the long work of erosion began. As millennia passed, the softer tuff wore down, giving way to pillars that stand as tall as 130 feet. The harder basalt erodes more slowly, forming a protective, mushroom-shaped cap over each one. Just like that, a fairy chimney is born — no pixie dust required :)



Cappadocia offers visitors an extraordinary and lavish banquet of natural wonders that exceed their wildest imaginations. These wonders are elegantly graced with works created by the hand of man. With its unique natural features displaying a harmonious combination of natural and cultural landscape elements, Cappadocia is an enchanting open-air museum and an unparalleled example of the common cultural heritage of humanity.



Cappadocia incorporates the provinces of Aksaray, Nevşehir, Niğde, Kayseri and Kırşehir. For most people, the name Cappadocia suggests the towns of Uçhisar, Göreme, Avanos, Ürgüp, Derinkuyu, Kaymaklı and Ihlara, where the land has been shaped into fantastic forms over the course of millions of years. Fairy chimneys that seem mysterious and cities and houses of worship that extend many meters deep into the earth are all enveloped in an atmosphere that is ethereal and unworldly.



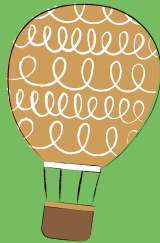
I suggest to prepare yourself to take a brief journey into the Cappadocian region, where Mother Nature painstakingly worked miracles that defy the imagination and where the living elements of history, culture, art and society are inextricably linked. A visit to Cappadocia is highly recommended for those who want to bathe in its atmosphere, colours and luminance.





# Sanctuary of Christians

In the early years of the first millennium, groups of Christians fleeing Roman persecution began moving into the inaccessible wilds of Cappadocia seeking refuge. One group which arrived from Jerusalem via Antioch (Antakya) and Caesarea (Kayseri) in the second century settled down in the area now known as Derinkuyu. Finding the soft volcanic tuff easy to carve, they began to expand the natural caves and link them together, creating dwellings, chapels, churches and monasteries through which these people found the peace and security they had so desperately sought.





It is said that there are around 500 churches and chapels in Cappadocia. The variety and artistry of their architecture, layout and decoration are fascinating and amazing. Basilicas with single, double or triple naves, cruciform plans, vestibules, aisles, apses, domes, columns, pillars and more can be found in these churches, with all having been hollowed out of stone. Many of the churches are also decorated with painstakingly-painted frescoes. The monumental task of restoring, repairing and maintaining these churches and underground cities goes on even while they receive thousands of visitors a year. The variety and artistry of churches and chapels are fascinating and amazing.



# Hot Air Balloons

And of course, I must mention about hot air balloons because Cappadocia is famed for both Fairy Chimneys and Hot Air Balloons, even some people know Cappadocia as "The Land of Hot Air Balloons". I need to say that watching the sunrise in a hot air balloon is a lifetime experience, but also other than the sunrise part, to be able to see The Fairy Chimneys from the top of them is very majestic and fascinating. That's why, I strongly recommend you that if you ever go to Cappadocia you should take a hot air balloon :)



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